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THE
ILIAD OF HOMER

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

VOLUME I.

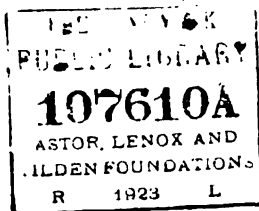


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NEW YORK
1854
LONDON

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P R E F A C E.

HAVING now nearly completed my translation of the Iliad of Homer, I sit down to write the Preface, that it may be prefixed to the first volume. To this task of translation, which I began in 1865, I afterwards gave myself the more willingly because it helped in some measure to divert my mind from a great domestic sorrow. I am not sure that, when it shall be concluded, it may not cost me some regret to part with so interesting a companion as the old Greek poet, whose thoughts I have, for four years past, been occupied, though with interruptions, in the endeavor to transfer from his own grand and musical Greek to our less sonorous but still manly and flexible tongue.

In what I shall say of my own translation I do not mean to speak in disparagement of any of the previous English versions of the Iliad, nor to extenuate my obligations to some of them. I acknowledge that although Homer is, as Cowper has well observed, the most perspicuous of poets, I have been sometimes, perhaps often, guided by the labors of my predecessors to a better mode of dealing with certain refractory passages of my author than I should otherwise have found. Let me, without detracting from their merits,

state what I have endeavored to do. I have endeavored to be strictly faithful in my rendering; to add nothing of my own, and to give the reader, so far as our language would allow, all that I found in the original. There are, however, in Homer, frequently recurring, certain expressions which are merely a kind of poetical finery, introduced when they are convenient to fill out a line or to give it a sonorous termination, and omitted when they are not needed for this purpose. The Greeks, for example, almost whenever they are spoken of, are magnanimous, or valiant, or warlike, or skilled in taming steeds: the Trojans are magnanimous also, and valiant, and warlike, and equally eminent in horsemanship. The warriors of the *Iliad* are all sons of some magnanimous or warlike parent. Achilles is the son of Peleus, and Peleus is magnanimous; and these epithets are repeated upon page after page throughout the poem. Achilles is spoken of as swift-footed or godlike almost whenever he appears, and sometimes is honored by both epithets. Hector is illustrious, and knightly, and distinguished by his beamy crest. Even the coxcomb Paris, for whom Homer seems to entertain a proper contempt, is godlike. These complimentary additions to the name of the warrior are, however, dispensed with whenever the hexameter is rounded to a well-sounding conclusion without them. Where they appear in the Greek, I have in nearly all instances retained them, making Achilles swift-footed and Ulysses fertile in resources, to the end of the poem; but in a very few cases, where they embarrassed the versification, I have used the liberty taken by Homer himself, and left them out. Everywhere else it has been my rule not

to exclude from the translation anything which I found in the text of my author.

There is another point in regard to which I have taken equal pains, and which seems to me equally important. I have endeavored to preserve the simplicity of style which distinguishes the old Greek poet, who wrote for the popular ear and according to the genius of his language, and I have chosen such English as offers no violence to the ordinary usages and structure of our own. I have sought to attain what belongs to the original,—a fluent narrative style, which shall carry the reader forward without the impediment of unexpected inversions and capricious phrases, and in which, if he find nothing to stop at and admire, there will at least be nothing to divert his attention from the story and the characters of the poem, from the events related and the objects described. I think that not many readers of the present day would agree with Pope, who, as Spence relates, after remarking that he had nothing to say for rhyme, went on to observe that he doubted whether a poem could be supported without it in our language, unless it were stiffened with such strange words as would destroy our language itself. It is remarkable that this should have been said by one who had given the reading world an edition of Shakespeare, in whose dramas are to be found passages of blank-verse which might be instanced as the perfection of that form of versification,—not to be excelled in sweetness of modulation, and grace and freedom of language,—without a single harsh inversion, or any of that clumsy stiffening which Pope so disapproved, yet seemed to think so necessary. The other dramatists of the Elizabethan period also supply examples of the same noble simplicity of

language and construction, suited to the highest poetry. In this translation the natural order of the words has been carefully preserved, as far as the exigencies of versification would allow, and I have ventured only upon those easy deviations from it which form no interruptions to the sense, and at most only remind the reader that he is reading verse.

I have chosen blank-verse for this reason among others, that it enabled me to keep more closely to the original in my rendering, without any sacrifice either of ease or of spirit in the expression. The use of rhyme in a translation is a constant temptation to petty infidelities, and to the employment of expressions which have an air of constraint, and do not the most adequately convey the thought. I had my reasons also for not adopting the ballad measure, which some have thought to allow the nearest approach to the manner of Homer. There are, it is true, certain affinities between the style of Homer and that of the old ballad poems of Great Britain. Both were the productions of a rude age; both were composed to be sung to public audiences; and this gave occasion to certain characteristics in which they resemble each other. But the Homeric poems, as it seems to me, are beyond the popular ballads of any modern nation in reach of thought and in richness of phraseology; and if I had adopted that form of poetry there would have been, besides the disadvantage of rhyme, a temptation to make the version conform in style and spirit to the old ballads of our own literature, in a degree which the original does not warrant, and which, as I think, would lead to some sacrifice of its dignity. I did not adopt the hexameter verse, principally for the reason that in our language it is confessedly an imperfect form of versifica-

tion, the true rhythm of which it is difficult for those whose ear is accustomed only to our ordinary metres to perceive. I found that I could not possibly render the Greek hexameters line for line, like Voss in his marvellous German version, in which he has not only done this, but generally preserved the pauses in the very part of the line in which Homer placed them. We have so many short words in English, and so few of the connective particles which are lavishly used by Homer, that often when I reached the end of the Greek line I found myself only in the middle of my line in English. This difficulty of subduing the thought—by compression or expansion of phrase—to the limits it must fill would alone have been sufficient to deter me from attempting a translation in hexameters. I therefore fell back upon blank-verse, which has been the vehicle of some of the noblest poetry in our language; both because it seemed to me by the flexibility of its construction best suited to a narrative poem, and because, while it enabled me to give the sense of my author more perfectly than any other form of verse, it allowed me also to avoid in a greater degree the appearance of constraint which is too apt to belong to a translation.

I make no apology for employing in my version the names Jupiter, Juno, Venus, and others of Latin origin, for Zeus, Here, Aphrodite, and other Greek names of the deities of whom Homer speaks. The names which I have adopted have been naturalized in our language for centuries, and some of them, as Mercury, Vulcan, and Dian, have even been provided with English terminations. I was translating from Greek into English, and I therefore translated the names of the gods, as well as the other parts of the poem.

In explanation of what may appear to some readers an unauthorized abridgment of the famous simile of the moon and stars at the end of the Eighth Book, I will mention here, by way of note,—the only one which I shall have occasion to make,—that in translating I have omitted two lines of the text, which the best critics regard as not properly belonging to it, but as transferred by some interpolator from another simile in the Sixteenth Book, where they are found in their proper place.

In the intimate acquaintance with the Iliad which the work of translation has given me, an impression has been revived which was made upon my mind when in my boyhood I first read that poem in an English version. I recollect very well the eager curiosity with which I seized upon the translation of Pope when it came within my reach, and with what avidity I ran through the pages which rendered into our language what was acknowledged to be the greatest production of poetic genius that the world had seen. I read with a deep interest for the fate of Troy, and with a kindly feeling toward Hector, whose part I took warmly against the bloodthirsty Achilles; and great as might have been the guilt of Paris, I read with an earnest wish that Troy might be delivered from its besiegers. When I came to the end of the poem, I laid it down with a feeling of disappointment. I was not told, save in certain dim predictions, what became of Troy, which the Greeks had mustered from so many regions to besiege, nor what was the fate of the mild and venerable Priam, and the aged Hecuba, and Andromache, the gentle and affectionate wife, and her infant son,—personages for whose fortunes the poet had

so powerfully awakened my concern and my curiosity. Helen, to recover whom the war was waged, was still in Troy, and Paris, her effeminate husband, was still alive and unharmed. Why the Trojans, who hated Paris—why Hector and the other sons of Priam, who disapproved of their brother's conduct—why Priam himself, who is never said to have approved of it, did not insist that the seducer should restore Helen to her first and proper husband, for whom she seems to have still entertained a lingering regard, I could never imagine. Particularly strange it seemed that Paris was not forced by his countrymen to give up Helen after the combat between him and Menelaus, in which he was clearly overcome, and by the terms of the solemn treaty which preceded the duel was bound to restore his stolen bride and her wealth to the Greeks. The poet has chosen to leave that circumstance without adequate explanation. The breaking of the truce by Pandarus, and the sudden renewal of the war in consequence, does not explain it, for afterwards, in the Seventh Book, we have Antenor proposing, in council, to restore Helen and her wealth, as a certain way of ending the war,—a proposal which is not adopted simply because Paris objects to it. Paris would not consent to restore Helen, and the Trojan princes and leaders, as if Paris were their absolute monarch, allowed him to have his way, and to prolong a war which Hector foresaw—as he says in the famous interview with Andromache—was to end in the destruction of Troy. The impression to which I refer has been confirmed by the minute study which I have recently made of the poem. I can make nothing of it but a detached chapter of the poetic history of the Trojan war, —

an episode in the narrative of that long siege which was to be concluded by a greater event than any recorded in the *Iliad*, the taking of the city of Troy;—a work of an inexhaustible imagination, with characters vigorously drawn and finely discriminated, and incidents rapidly succeeding each other and infinitely diversified,—everywhere a noble simplicity, mellifluous numbers, and images of beauty and grandeur; yet everywhere indications that the poem had a continuation. It is full of references to events which are yet to be related, and provokes a desire for further disclosures, which it fails to gratify. There are frequent allusions to the brief term of life allotted to Achilles, and several, one of which I have already mentioned, to the final capture of Troy. Thetis predicts that her son, perishing almost immediately after taking the life of Hector, will not live to see the fall of the besieged city. The audiences before whom the books of the *Iliad* were recited by the minstrels would naturally say: “You speak of the capture of Troy; tell us how it was taken at last. Achilles, the mightiest of warriors, you say, was to be slain soon after the death of Hector. Relate the manner of his death, and how it was received by the Greeks and the Trojans. Describe his funeral, as you described those of his friend Patroclus and his adversary Hector. Tell us what became of Andromache, and Astyanax, her son, and all the royal family of Priam.” Thus may we suppose that, until Aristotle arose to demonstrate the contrary, the fable of the *Iliad* must have appeared to the general mind to be incomplete.

Let me say a word or two of the personage whom the critics call the hero of the *Iliad*. Achilles is ill-used by Agamemnon,

the general-in-chief of the Greeks,—and so far he has the sympathy of the reader; but he is a ferocious barbarian at best, and as the narrative proceeds, he loses all title to our interest. His horrid prayer that the Greeks may be slaughtered by thousands until they learn to despise a monarch who has done him a personal injury, and his inhuman delight in the havoc made of them by the Trojans under Hector, cause us to turn from him with the horror and aversion due to a selfish and cruel nature which imposes no reserve or restraint upon its own impulses. His warm affection for his gentle friend and companion, Patroclus, partly restores him to our favor; but his pitiless treatment of the Trojans who supplicate him for quarter, and his capture of twelve Trojan youths in order to cut their throats at the funeral pile of Patroclus, as he afterwards does in cold blood, bring back our disgust; and when Hector with his dying voice warns him of his approaching death, the reader has no objection to offer. If Achilles be the hero of the poem, the poet has not succeeded in obtaining for him either our good opinion or our good wishes. In the fortunes of Hector, however, whose temper is noble and generous, who while grieving at the crime of Paris defends his country with all his valor, whose character is as gentle and affectionate as it is spirited and manly, it is impossible for the reader not to feel a strong interest. The last book of the Iliad relates the recovery of his dead body from the Greeks, and the celebration of his funeral in Troy. In this book, also, the character of Achilles appears less unamiable, since he grants the rites of hospitality to Priam, and is persuaded by his entreaties to restore, for a princely ransom, the dead body of Hector, contrary to his first resolution.

It is to be observed, however, that he is moved to this, not by his own native magnanimity, but by considerations which indirectly relate to himself, — that is to say, by being artfully led to think of his own father, Peleus, an aged man like Priam, anxiously waiting in his distant palace for the return of his son from the war, and fearing that he may never behold him again. Once in the interview with Priam the fierce and brutal nature of Achilles breaks out in threats, which terrify the old king into silence. Priam is himself warned by the gods that he is not safe in remaining overnight in the tent of Achilles, and, lest he should not be protected from the ferocity of Agamemnon, withdraws by stealth in the darkness and returns to Troy.

I have no answer to make to those who regard it as a blemish in the great work of Homer that he represents the gods in their dealings with men as governed, for the most part, by motives either mean and base, or frivolous and childish. In the Trojan war everything happens by their direction or their prompting. In the system of Homer it is they who stir up men to strife, who bring on the battles, promote the slaughter, and bring it to an end, urge the personages of the fable to ruinous follies and imprudences, and give or withhold victory at their pleasure; and in all this their rule is not one of justice and beneficence, but of caprice. Their favor is purchased by hecatombs, and their hatred incurred by acts which have no moral quality that should give offence to an upright judge. They are debauched, mercenary, rapacious, and cruel; they dwell in a world in which the rules of right and the maxims necessary to the well-being of human society find no recognition. It was for this reason that Plato, the earliest author

of an *Index expurgatorius*, forbade the circulation of the writings of the Greek poets in his imaginary commonwealth.

Yet let me say this in favor of my author, that in one part of the poem the absolute rectitude of the Divine government is solemnly recognized. In the Third Book of the Iliad, a truce is agreed upon between the Trojans and the Greeks, while Menelaus and Paris are to decide by single combat the quarrel which has occasioned the siege of Troy. A compact is made, according to which the victor is to possess Helen and her wealth, and the Trojans and Greeks are ever afterward to remain friends and allies. The gods are invoked to be witnesses of the treaty, and to pursue with their vengeance those by whom it shall be violated, whether they be Greeks or Trojans. Few passages in the Iliad are more striking or of graver import than this appeal to the justice of the gods,—this testimony, given by two warring nations, of their confidence in the equity with which the immortals govern the world. Paris is overcome by Menelaus in the combat; the truce is broken by a Trojan, who wounds Menelaus severely; the treaty is not fulfilled by delivering up Helen; and, as the action of the poem proceeds in the next book, Agamemnon exhorts the Greeks to fight valiantly, in the full assurance that Jupiter and the other gods will never permit treachery to remain unpunished; and accordingly he predicts a terrible retribution already hanging over Troy. And whatever may be our admiration for the amiable and noble qualities of Hector, and our sympathy for the thousands of innocent persons dwelling in his populous city, it cannot be denied that the interference of the gods in the affairs of Troy leads in the end to a great result consistent with sub-

stantial justice. Paris, the violator of the laws of hospitality, the adulterer and robber, is sheltered, protected, and countenanced in Troy,—the Trojan people make themselves partakers in his guilt; and in the end they share in its punishment. Hector, the prop of their state, the champion in whom they put their trust, is slain; and we are allowed, by means of predictions, a glimpse of the coming destruction of Troy, and learn that the sceptre of the kingdom will pass from the house of Priam, whose son committed the crime which led to the war, and will be swayed by the posterity of the blameless Æneas.

Here I leave my translation in the hands of the reading public, who, if they do not wholly neglect it, will judge whether I have made any approach toward the fulfilment of the design set forth in the beginning of this Preface.

W. C. BRYANT.

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THE ILIAD.

BOOK I.

O GODDESS! sing the wrath of Peleus' son,
Achilles; sing the deadly wrath that brought
Woes numberless upon the Greeks, and swept
To Hades many a valiant soul, and gave
Their limbs a prey to dogs and birds of air, —
For so had Jove appointed, — from the time
When the two chiefs, Atrides, king of men,
And great Achilles, parted first as foes.

Which of the gods put strife between the chiefs,
That they should thus contend? Latona's son
And Jove's. Incensed against the king, he bade
A deadly pestilence appear among
The army, and the men were perishing.
For Atreus' son with insult had received
Chryses the priest, who to the Grecian fleet

Came to redeem his daughter, offering
Uncounted ransom. In his hand he bore
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god,
Upon the golden sceptre, and he sued
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host:—

20

“Ye sons of Atreus, and ye other chiefs,
Well-greaved Achaians, may the gods who dwell
Upon Olympus give you to o’erthrow
The city of Priam, and in safety reach
Your homes; but give me my beloved child,
And take her ransom, honoring him who sends
His arrows far, Apollo, son of Jove.”

25

Then all the other Greeks, applauding, bade
Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts
He offered, but the counsel did not please
Atrides Agamemnon; he dismissed
The priest with scorn, and added threatening words:—

30

“Old man, let me not find thee loitering here,
Beside the roomy ships, or coming back
Hereafter, lest the fillet thou dost bear
And sceptre of thy god protect thee not.
This maiden I release not till old age
Shall overtake her in my Argive home,

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Book I.

3

Far from her native country, where her hand
Shall throw the shuttle and shall dress my couch.
Go, chafe me not, if thou wouldst safely go."

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He spake; the aged man in fear obeyed
The mandate, and in silence walked apart,
Along the many-sounding ocean-side,
And fervently he prayed the monarch-god,
Apollo, golden-haired Latona's son: —

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"Hear me, thou bearer of the silver bow,
Who guardest Chrysa, and the holy isle
Of Cilla, and art lord in Tenedos,
O Smintheus! if I ever helped to deck
Thy glorious temple, if I ever burned
Upon thy altar the fat thighs of goats
And bullocks, grant my prayer, and let thy shafts
Avenge upon the Greeks the tears I shed."

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So spake he supplicating, and to him
Phœbus Apollo hearkened. Down he came,
Down from the summit of the Olympian mount,
Wrathful in heart; his shoulders bore the bow
And hollow quiver; there the arrows rang
Upon the shoulders of the angry god,
As on he moved. He came as comes the night,
And, seated from the ships aloof, sent forth

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An arrow; terrible was heard the clang
Of that resplendent bow. At first he smote
The mules and the swift dogs, and then on man
He turned the deadly arrow. All around
Glared evermore the frequent funeral piles.
Nine days already had his shafts been showered
Among the host, and now, upon the tenth,
Achilles called the people of the camp
To council. Juno, of the snow-white arms,
Had moved his mind to this, for she beheld
With sorrow that the men were perishing.
And when the assembly met and now was full,
Stood swift Achilles in the midst and said: —

“To me it seems, Atrides, that ’t were well,
Since now our aim is baffled, to return
Homeward, if death o’ertake us not; for war
And pestilence at once destroy the Greeks.
But let us first consult some seer or priest,
Or dream-interpreter, — for even dreams
Are sent by Jove, — and ask him by what cause
Phœbus Apollo has been angered thus;
If by neglected vows or hecatombs,
And whether savor of fat bulls and goats
May move the god to stay the pestilence.”

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He spake, and took again his seat; and next
Rose Calchas, son of Thestor, and the chief
Of augurs, one to whom were known things past 90
And present and to come. He, through the art
Of divination, which Apollo gave,
Had guided Iliumward the ships of Greece.
With words well ordered courteously he spake:—

“Achilles, loved of Jove, thou biddest me 95
Explain the wrath of Phœbus, monarch-god,
Who sends afar his arrows. Willingly
Will I make known the cause; but covenant thou,
And swear to stand prepared, by word and hand,
To bring me succor. For my mind misgives 100
That he who rules the Argives, and to whom
The Achaian race are subject, will be wroth.
A sovereign is too strong for humbler men,
And though he keep his choler down awhile,
It rankles, till he sate it, in his heart. 105
And now consider: wilt thou hold me safe?”

Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:—
“Fear nothing, but speak boldly out whate’er
Thou knowest, and declare the will of Heaven.
For by Apollo, dear to Jove, whom thou, 110
Calchas, dost pray to, when thou givest forth

The sacred oracles to men of Greece,
No man, while yet I live, and see the light
Of day, shall lay a violent hand on thee
Among our roomy ships; no man of all
The Grecian armies, though thou name the name
Of Agamemnon, whose high boast it is
To stand in power and rank above them all."

115

Encouraged thus, the blameless seer went on: —
"Tis not neglected vows or hecatombs
That move him, but the insult shown his priest,
Whom Agamemnon spurned, when he refused
To set his daughter free, and to receive
Her ransom. Therefore sends the archer-god
These woes, and still will send them on the Greeks,
Nor ever will withdraw his heavy hand
From our destruction, till the dark-eyed maid
Freely, and without ransom, be restored
To her beloved father, and with her
A sacred hecatomb to Chrysa sent.
So may we haply pacify the god."

120

125

130

Thus having said, the augur took his seat.
And then the hero-son of Atreus rose,
Wide-ruling Agamemnon, greatly chafed.
His gloomy heart was full of wrath, his eyes

135

Sparkled like fire; he fixed a menacing look
Full on the augur Calchas, and began:—

“Prophet of evil! never hadst thou yet
A cheerful word for me. To mark the signs
Of coming mischief is thy great delight. 140

Good dost thou ne’er foretell nor bring to pass.

And now thou pratest, in thine auguries,
Before the Greeks, how that the archer-god

Afflicts us thus, because I would not take
The costly ransom offered to redeem 145

The virgin child of Chryses. ’Twas my choice

To keep her with me, for I prize her more
Than Clytemnestra, bride of my young years,

And deem her not less nobly graced than she,
In form and feature, mind and pleasing arts. 150

Yet will I give her back, if that be best;

For gladly would I see my people saved
From this destruction. Let meet recompense,

Meantime, be ready, that I be not left,
Alone of all the Greeks, without my prize. 155

That were not seemly. All of you perceive
That now my share of spoil has passed from me.”

To him the great Achilles, swift of foot,
Replied: “Renowned Atrides, greediest

Of men, where wilt thou that our noble Greeks 160
Find other spoil for thee, since none is set
Apart, a common store? The trophies brought
From towns which we have sacked have all been shared
Among us, and we could not without shame
Bid every warrior bring his portion back. 165
Yield, then, the maiden to the god, and we,
The Achaïans, freely will appoint for thee
Threelfold and fourfold recompense, should Jove
Give up to sack this well-defended Troy."

Then the king Agamemnon answered thus:— 170
"Nay, use no craft, all valiant as thou art,
Godlike Achilles; thou hast not the power
To circumvent nor to persuade me thus.
Think'st thou that, while thou keepest safe thy prize,
I shall sit idly down, deprived of mine? 175
Thou bid'st me give the maiden back. 'Tis well,
If to my hands the noble Greeks shall bring
The worth of what I lose, and in a shape
That pleases me. Else will I come myself,
And seize and bear away thy prize, or that 180
Of Ajax or Ulysses, leaving him
From whom I take his share with cause for rage.
Another time we will confer of this.

Now come, and forth into the great salt sea
 Launch a black ship, and muster on the deck 185
 Men skilled to row, and put a hecatomb
 On board, and let the fair-cheeked maid embark,
 Chryseis. Send a prince to bear command,—
 Ajax, Idomeneus, or the divine
 Ulysses; — or thyself, Pelides, thou 190
 Most terrible of men, that with due rites
 Thou soothe the anger of the archer-god.”

Achilles the swift-footed, with stern look,
 Thus answered: “Ha, thou mailed in impudence
 And bent on lucre! Who of all the Greeks 195
 Can willingly obey thee, on the march,
 Or bravely battling with the enemy?
 I came not to this war because of wrong
 Done to me by the valiant sons of Troy.
 No feud had I with them; they never took 200
 My beeves or horses, nor, in Phthia’s realm,
 Deep-soiled and populous, spoiled my harvest fields.
 For many a shadowy mount between us lies,
 And waters of the wide-resounding sea.
 Man unabashed! we follow thee that thou 205
 Mayst glory in avenging upon Troy
 The grudge of Menelaus and thy own,

Thou shameless one! and yet thou hast for this
Nor thanks nor care. Thou threatenest now to take
From me the prize for which I bore long toils 210
In battle; and the Greeks decreed it mine.
I never take an equal share with thee
Of booty when the Grecian host has sacked
Some populous Trojan town. My hands perform
The harder labors of the field in all 215
The tumult of the fight; but when the spoil
Is shared, the largest share of all is thine,
While I, content with little, seek my ships,
Weary with combat. I shall now go home
To Phthia; better were it to return 220
With my beaked ships; but here, where I am held
In little honor, thou wilt fail, I think,
To gather, in large measure, spoil and wealth."

Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:—
"Desert, then, if thou wilt; I ask thee not 225
To stay for me; there will be others left
To do me honor yet, and, best of all,
The all-providing Jove is with me still.
Thee I detest the most of all the men
Ordained by him to govern; thy delight 230
Is in contention, war, and bloody frays.

If thou art brave, some deity, no doubt,
Hath thus endowed thee. Hence, then, to thy home,
With all thy ships and men! there domineer
Over thy Myrmidons; I heed thee not, 235
Nor care I for thy fury. Thus, in turn,
I threaten thee; since Phœbus takes away
Chryseis, I will send her in my ship
And with my friends, and, coming to thy tent,
Will bear away the fair-cheeked maid, thy prize, 240
Briseis, that thou learn how far I stand
Above thee, and that other chiefs may fear
To measure strength with me and brave my power."

The rage of Peleus' son, as thus he spake,
Grew fiercer; in that shaggy breast his heart 245
Took counsel, whether from his thigh to draw
The trenchant sword, and, thrusting back the rest,
Smite down Atrides, or subdue his wrath
And master his own spirit. While he thus
Debated with himself, and half unsheathed 250
The ponderous blade, Pallas Athene came,
Sent from on high by Juno, the white-armed,
Who loved both warriors and made both her care.
She came behind him, seen by him alone,
And plucked his yellow hair. The hero turned 255

In wonder, and at once he knew the look
 Of Pallas and the awful-gleaming eye,
 And thus accosted her with winged words:—
 “Why com’st thou hither, daughter of the god
 Who bears the ægis? Art thou here to see
 The insolence of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus? Let me tell thee what I deem
 Will be the event. That man may lose his life,
 And quickly too, for arrogance like this.”

260

Then thus the goddess, blue-eyed Pallas, spake:— 164
 “I came from heaven to pacify thy wrath,
 If thou wilt heed my counsel. I am sent
 By Juno the white-armed, to whom ye both
 Are dear, who ever watches o’er you both.
 Refrain from violence; let not thy hand
 Unsheathe the sword, but utter with thy tongue
 Reproaches, as occasion may arise,
 For I declare what time shall bring to pass;
 Threefold amends shall yet be offered thee,
 In gifts of princely cost, for this day’s wrong.
 Now calm thy angry spirit, and obey.”

270

276

Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:—
 “O goddess, be the word thou bring’st obeyed,
 However fierce my anger; for to him
 Who hearkens to the gods, the gods give ear.”

280

So speaking, on the silver hilt he stayed
His strong right hand, and back into its sheath
Thrust his good sword, obeying. She, meantime,
Returned to heaven, where ægis-bearing Jove
Dwells with the other gods. And now again 285
Pelides, with opprobrious words, bespake
The son of Atreus, venting thus his wrath:—
“Wine-bibber, with the forehead of a dog
And a deer’s heart! Thou never yet hast dared
To arm thyself for battle with the rest, 290
Nor join the other chiefs prepared to lie
In ambush,—such thy craven fear of death.
Better it suits thee, midst the mighty host
Of Greeks, to rob some warrior of his prize
Who dares withstand thee. King thou art, and yet 295
Devourer of thy people. Thou dost rule
A spiritless race, else this day’s insolence,
Atrides, were thy last. And now I say,
And bind my saying with a mighty oath:
By this my sceptre, which can never bear 300
A leaf or twig, since first it left its stem
Among the mountains,—for the steel has pared
Its boughs and bark away, to sprout no more,—
And now the Achaian judges bear it,—they

Who guard the laws received from Jupiter,— 305
Such is my oath,—the time shall come when all
The Greeks shall long to see Achilles back,
While multitudes are perishing by the hand
Of Hector, the man-queller; thou, meanwhile,
Though thou lament, shalt have no power to help, 310
And thou shalt rage against thyself to think
That thou hast scorned the bravest of the Greeks.”

As thus he spake, Pelides to the ground
Flung the gold-studded wand, and took his seat.
Fiercely Atrides raged; but now uprose 315
Nestor, the master of persuasive speech,
The clear-toned Pylian orator, whose tongue
Dropped words more sweet than honey. He had seen
Two generations that grew up and lived
With him on sacred Pylos pass away, 320
And now he ruled the third. With prudent words
He thus addressed the assembly of the chiefs:—

“Ye gods! what new misfortunes threaten Greece!
How Priam would exult and Priam’s sons,
And how would all the Trojan race rejoice, 325
Were they to know how furiously ye strive,—
Ye who in council and in fight surpass
The other Greeks. Now hearken to my words,—

Ye who are younger than myself, — for I
Have lived with braver men than you, and yet 330
They held me not in light esteem. Such men
I never saw, nor shall I see again, —
Men like Pirithoüs and like Druas, lord
Of nations, Cæneus and Exadius,
And the great Polypheme, and Theseus, son 335
Of Ægeus, likest to the immortal gods.
Strongest of all the earth-born race they fought —
The strongest with the strongest of their time —
With Centaurs, the wild dwellers of the hills,
And fearfully destroyed them. With these men 340
Did I hold converse, coming to their camp
From Pylos in a distant land. They sent
To bid me join the war, and by their side
I fought my best, but no man living now
On the wide earth would dare to fight with them. 345
Great as they were, they listened to my words
And took my counsel. Hearken also ye,
And let my words persuade you for the best.
Thou, powerful as thou art, take not from him
The maiden; suffer him to keep the prize 350
Decreed him by the sons of Greece; and thou,
Pelides, strive no longer with the king,

Since never Jove on sceptred prince bestowed
Like eminence to his. Though braver thou,
And goddess-born, yet hath he greater power 355
And wider sway. Atrides, calm thy wrath—
'T is I who ask—against the chief who stands
The bulwark of the Greeks in this fierce war."

To him the sovereign Agamemnon said:—
"The things which thou hast uttered, aged chief, 360
Are fitly spoken; but this man would stand
Above all others; he aspires to be
The master, over all to domineer,
And to direct in all things; yet, I think,
There may be one who will not suffer this. 365
For if by favor of the immortal gods
He was made brave, have they for such a cause
Given him the liberty of insolent speech?"

Hereat the great Achilles, breaking in,
Answered: "Yea, well might I deserve the name 370
Of coward and of wretch, should I submit
In all things to thy bidding. Such commands
Lay thou on others, not on me; nor think
I shall obey thee longer. This I say,—
And bear it well in mind,—I shall not lift 375
My hand to keep the maiden whom ye gave

And now take from me; but whatever else
May be on board that swift black ship of mine,
Beware thou carry not away the least
Without my leave. Come, make the trial now, 380
That these may see thy black blood bathe my spear."

Then, rising from that strife of words, the twain
Dissolved the assembly at the Grecian fleet.
Pelides to his tents and well-manned ships
Went with Patroclus and his warrior friends, 385
While Agamemnon bade upon the sea
Launch a swift bark with twenty chosen men
To ply the oar, and put a hecatomb
Upon it for the god. He thither led
The fair-cheeked maid Chryseis; the command 390
He gave to wise Ulysses; forth they went,
Leader and crew, upon their watery path.
Meanwhile, he bade the camp be purified;
And straight the warriors purified the camp,
And, casting the pollutions to the waves, 395
They burned to Phœbus chosen hecatombs
Of bulls and goats beside the barren main,
From which the savor rose in smoke to heaven.

So was the host employed. But not the less
Did Agamemnon persevere to urge 400

His quarrel with Pelides; and he thus
Addressed Talthybius and Eurybates,
His heralds and his faithful ministers:—

“Go ye to where Achilles holds his tent,
And take the fair Briseis by the hand, 405
And bring her hither. If he yield her not,
I shall come forth to claim her with a band
Of warriors, and it shall be worse for him.”

He spake, and sent them forth with added words
Of menace. With unwilling steps they went 410
Beside the barren deep, until they reached
The tents and vessels of the Myrmidons,
And found Achilles seated by his tent
And his black ship; their coming pleased him not.
They, moved by fear and reverence of the king, 415
Stopped, and bespake him not, nor signified
Their errand; he perceived their thought and said:—

“Hail, heralds, messengers of Jove and men!
Draw near; I blame you not. I only blame 420
Atrides, who hath sent you for the maid.
Noble Patroclus! bring the damsel forth,
And let them lead her hence. My witnesses
Are ye, before the blessed deities,
And mortal men, and this remorseless king,

If ever he shall need me to avert
The doom of utter ruin from his host.
Most sure it is, he madly yields himself
To fatal counsels, thoughtless of the past
And of the future, nor forecasting how
The Greeks may fight, unvanquished, by their fleet." 425 430

He spake. Meantime Patroclus had obeyed
The word of his beloved friend. He brought
The fair-checked maid Briseis from the tent,
And she was led away. The messengers
Returned to where their barks were moored, and she 435
Unwillingly went with them. Then in tears
Achilles, from his friends withdrawing, sat
Beside the hoary ocean-marge, and gazed
On the black deep beyond, and stretched his hands,
And prayed to his dear mother, earnestly: — 440

"Mother! since thou didst bring me forth to dwell
Brief space on earth, Olympian Jupiter,
Who thunders in the highest, should have filled
That space with honors, but he grants them not.
Wide-ruling Agamemnon takes and holds 445
The prize I won, and thus dishonors me."

Thus, shedding tears, he spake. His mother heard,
Sitting within the ocean deeps, beside

Her aged father. Swiftly from the waves
Of the gray deep emerging like a cloud, 450
She sat before him as he wept, and smoothed
His brow with her soft hand, and kindly said:—

“My child, why weepest thou? What grief is this?
Speak, and hide nothing, so that both may know.”

Achilles, swift of foot, sighed heavily, 455
And said: “Thou know’st already. Why relate
These things to thee, who art apprised of all?

“To Thebé, to Eëtion’s sacred town,
We marched, and plundered it, and hither-brought
The booty, which was fairly shared among 460
The sons of Greece, and Agamemnon took
The fair-cheeked maid Chryseis as his prize.
But Chryses, priest of Phœbus, to the fleet
Of the Achaian warriors, brazen-mailed,
Came, to redeem his daughter, offering 465
Ransom uncounted. In his hand he bore
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god,
Upon the golden sceptre, and he sued
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host. 470
Then all the other chiefs, applauding, bade
Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts

He offered; but the counsel did not please
Atrides Agamemnon: he dismissed
The priest with scorn, and added threatening words. 475
The aged man indignantly withdrew;
And Phœbus—for the priest was dear to him—
Granted his prayer and sent among the Greeks
A deadly shaft. The people of the camp
Were perishing in heaps. His arrows flew 480
Among the Grecian army, far and wide.
A seer expert in oracles revealed
The will of Phœbus, and I was the first
To counsel that the god should be appeased.
But Agamemnon rose in sudden wrath, 485
Uttering a threat, which he has since fulfilled.
And now the dark-eyed Greeks are taking back
His child to Chryses, and with her they bear
Gifts to the monarch-god; while to my tent
Heralds have come, and borne away the maid 490
Briseis, given me by the sons of Greece.
But succor thou thy son, if thou hast power;
Ascend to heaven and bring thy prayer to Jove,
If e'er by word or act thou gav'st him aid.
For I remember, in my father's halls 495
I often heard thee, glorying, tell how thou,

Alone of all the gods, didst interpose
 To save the cloud-compeller, Saturn's son,
 From shameful overthrow, when all the rest
 Who dwell upon Olympus had conspired 500
 To bind him, — Juno, Neptune, and with them
 Pallas Athene. Thou didst come and loose
 His bonds, and call up to the Olympian heights
 The hundred-handed, whom the immortal gods
 Have named Briareus, but the sons of men 505
 Ægeon, mightier than his sire in strength;
 And he, rejoicing in the honor, took
 His seat by Jove, and all the immortals shrank
 Aghast before him, and let fall the chains.
 Remind him of all this, and, sitting down, 510
 Embrace his knees, and pray him to befriend
 The Trojans, that the Greeks, hemmed in and slain
 Beside their ships and by the shore, may learn
 To glory in their king, and even he,
 Wide-ruling Agamemnon, may perceive 515
 How grievous was his folly when he dared
 To treat with scorn the bravest of the Greeks."

And Thetis answered, weeping as she spake: —
 "Alas, my son, why did I rear thee, born
 To sorrow as thou wert? O would that thou 520

Unwronged, and with no cause for tears, couldst dwell
Beside thy ships, since thou must die so soon.

I brought thee forth in an unhappy hour,
Short-lived and wronged beyond all other men.

Yet will I climb the Olympian height among 525

Its snows and make my suit to Jupiter

The Thunderer, if haply he may yield

To my entreaties. Thou, meanwhile, abide

By thy swift ships, incensed against the Greeks,

And take no part in all their battles more. 530

But yesterday did Jove depart to hold

A banquet far in Ocean's realm, among

The blameless Ethiopians, and with him

Went all the train of gods. Twelve days must pass

Ere he return to heaven, and I will then 535

Enter his brazen palace, clasp his knees,

And hope to move his purpose by my prayers."

So saying, she departed, leaving him

In anger for the shapely damsel's sake,

Whom forcibly they took away. Meantime 540

Ulysses, with the sacred hecatomb,

Arrived at Chrysa. Entering the deep port,

They folded up the sails and laid them down

In the black ship, and lowering the mast,

With all its shrouds, they brought it to its place. 545

Then to the shore they urged the bark with oars,

And cast the anchors and secured the prow

With fastenings. Next, they disembarked and stood

Upon the beach and placed the hecatomb

In sight of Phœbus, the great archer. Last, 550

Chryseis left the deck, and, leading her

Up to the altar, wise Ulysses gave

The maid to her dear father, speaking thus:—

“O Chryses! Agamemnon, king of men,

Sends me in haste to bring this maid to thee 555

And offer up this hallowed hecatomb

To Phœbus, for the Greeks; that so the god,

Whose wrath afflicts us sore, may be appeased.”

So speaking, to her father's hands he gave

The maiden; joyfully the priest received 560

The child he loved. Then did the Greeks array

The noble hecatomb in order round

The sculptured altar, and with washen hands

They took the salted meal, while Chryses stood

And spread abroad his hands and prayed aloud:— 565

“Hear me, thou bearer of the glittering bow,

Who guardest Chrysa and the pleasant isle

Of Cilla and art lord in Tenedos!

Already hast thou listened to my prayer
And honored me, and terribly hast scourged 570
The Achaian people. Hear me yet again,
And cause the plague that wastes the Greeks to cease."

So spake he, supplicating, and to him
Phœbus Apollo hearkened. When the prayers
Were ended, and the salted meal was flung, 575
Backward they turned the necks of the fat beeves,
And cut their throats, and flayed the carcasses,
And hewed away the thighs, and covered them
With caul in double folds; and over this
They laid raw fragments of the other parts. 580

O'er all the aged priest poured dark red wine,
And burned them on dry wood. A band of youths
With five-pronged spits, beside him, thrust these through
The entrails, which they laid among the flames.

And when the thighs were all consumed, and next 585
The entrails tasted, all the rest was carved

Into small portions and transfixed with spits
And roasted with nice care and then withdrawn
From the hot coals. This task performed, they made
The banquet ready. All became its guests 590

And all were welcome to the equal feast.

And when their thirst and hunger were allayed,

Boys crowned the ample urns with wreaths, and served
The wine to all, and poured libations forth.
Meantime the Argive youths, that whole day long, 595
Sang to appease the god; they chanted forth
High anthems to the archer of the skies.
He listened to the strain, and his stern mood
Was softened. When, at length, the sun went down
And darkness fell, they gave themselves to sleep 600
Beside the fastenings of their ships, and when
Appeared the rosy-fingered Dawn, the child
Of Morning, they returned to the great host
Of the Achaïans. Phœbus deigned to send
A favoring breeze; at once they reared the mast 605
And opened the white sails; the canvas swelled
Before the wind, and hoarsely round the keel
The dark waves murmured as the ship flew on.
So ran she, cutting through the sea her way.
But when they reached the great Achaïan host, 610
They drew their vessel high upon the shore
Among the sands, and underneath its sides
They laid long beams to prop the keel, and straight
Dispersed themselves among the tents and ships.
The goddess-born Achilles, swift of foot, 615
Beside his ships still brooded o'er his wrath,

Nor came to council with the illustrious chiefs,
Nor to the war, but suffered idleness
To eat his heart away; for well he loved
Clamor and combat. But when now, at length, 610
The twelfth day came, the ever-living gods
Returned together to the Olympian mount
With Jove, their leader. Thetis kept in mind
Her son's desire, and, with the early morn,
Emerging from the depths of ocean, climbed 625
To the great heaven and the high mount, and found
All-seeing Jove, who, from the rest apart,
Was seated on the loftiest pinnacle
Of many-peaked Olympus. She sat down
Before the son of Saturn, clasped his knees
With her left arm, and lifted up her right 630
In supplication to the Sovereign One: —
 “O Jupiter, my father, if among
The immortals I have ever given thee aid
By word or act, deny not my request.
Honor my son, whose life is doomed to end 635
So soon; for Agamemnon, king of men,
Hath done him shameful wrong: he takes from him
And keeps the prize he won in war. But thou,
Olympian Jupiter, supremely wise,
Honor him thou, and give the Trojan host 640

The victory, until the humbled Greeks
Heap large increase of honors on my son."

She spake, but cloud-compelling Jupiter
Answered her not; in silence long he sat.
But Thetis, who had clasped his knees at first,
Clung to them still, and prayed him yet again: —

"O promise me, and grant my suit; or else
Deny it,—for thou need'st not fear,—and I
Shall know how far below the other gods
Thou holdest me in honor." As she spake,
The Cloud-compeller, sighing heavily,
Answered her thus: "Hard things dost thou require,
And thou wilt force me into new disputes
With Juno, who will anger me again
With contumelious words; for ever thus,
In presence of the immortals, doth she seek
Cause of contention, charging that I aid
The Trojans in their battles. Now depart,
And let her not perceive thee. Leave the rest
To be by me accomplished; and that thou
Mayst be assured, behold, I give the nod;
For this, with me, the immortals know, portends
The highest certainty: no word of mine
Which once my nod confirms can be revoked,
Or prove untrue, or fail to be fulfilled."

As thus he spake, the son of Saturn gave
The nod with his dark brows. The ambrosial curls
Upon the Sovereign One's immortal head
Were shaken, and with them the mighty mount
Olympus trembled. Then they parted, she 670
Plunging from bright Olympus to the deep,
And Jove returning to his palace home;
Where all the gods, uprising from their thrones,
At sight of the Great Father, waited not
For his approach, but met him as he came. 675

And now upon his throne the Godhead took
His seat, but Juno knew — for she had seen —
That Thetis of the silver feet, and child
Of the gray Ancient of the Deep, had held
Close council with her consort. Therefore she 680
Bespoke the son of Saturn harshly, thus:—

“O crafty one, with whom, among the gods,
Plottest thou now? Thus hath it ever been
Thy pleasure to devise, apart from me,
Thy plans in secret; never willingly 685
Dost thou reveal to me thy purposes.”

Then thus replied the Father of the gods
And mortals: “Juno, do not think to know
All my designs, for thou wilt find the task

Too hard for thee, although thou be my spouse.

690

What fitting is to be revealed, no one

Of all the immortals or of men shall know

Sooner than thou; but when I form designs

Apart from all the gods, presume thou not

To question me or pry into my plans."

695

Juno, the large-eyed and august, rejoined:—

"What words, stern son of Saturn, hast thou said!

It never was my wont to question thee

Or pry into thy plans, and thou art left

To form them as thou wilt; yet now I fear

700

The silver-footed Thetis has contrived—

That daughter of the Ancient of the Deep—

To o'erpersuade thee, for, at early prime,

She sat before thee and embraced thy knees;

And thou hast promised her, I cannot doubt,

705

To give Achilles honor and to cause

Myriads of Greeks to perish by their fleet."

Then Jove, the cloud-compeller, spake again:—

"Harsh-tongued! thou ever dost suspect me thus,

Nor can I act unwatched; and yet all this

710

Profits thee nothing, for it only serves

To breed dislike, and is the worse for thee.

But were it as thou deemest, 't is enough

That such has been my pleasure. Sit thou down
In silence, and obey, lest all the gods
Upon Olympus, when I come and lay
These potent hands on thee, protect thee not."

715

He spake, and Juno, large-eyed and august,
O'erawed, and curbing her high spirit, sat

In silence; meanwhile all the gods of heaven
Within the halls of Jove were inly grieved.

720

But Vulcan, the renowned artificer,
Sought to console his mother in her grief,—
The white-armed Juno,—and thus interposed:—

"Great will the evil be and hard to bear,
If, for the sake of mortals, ye are moved

725

To such contention and the assembled gods
Disturbed with discord. Even the pleasant feast
Will lose its flavor when embittered thus.

And let me warn my mother while I speak,
Wise as she is, that she defer to Jove,

730

Lest the All-Father angrily again

Reply, and spoil the banquet of the day.

The Thunderer of Olympus, if he choose

To make a wreck of all things, wields a power

735

Far greater than we all. Accost him thou

With gentle speeches, and the Lord of heaven

Will then regard us in a kindly mood."

As thus he spake, he gave into the hands
Of his beloved mother the round cup
Of double form, and thus he spake again:—

740

“Mother, be patient and submit, although
In sadness, lest these eyes behold thee yet
Beaten with stripes, and though I hold thee dear
And grieve for thee, I cannot bring thee help;
For hard it is to strive with Jupiter.

745

Already once, when I took part with thee,
He seized me by the foot and flung me o'er
The battlements of heaven. All day I fell,
And with the setting sun I struck the earth
In Lemnos. Little life was left in me,
What time the Sintians took me from the ground.”

750

He spake, and Juno, the white-shouldered, smiled,
And smiling took the cup her son had brought;
And next he poured to all the other gods
Sweet nectar from the jar, beginning first
With those at the right hand. As they beheld
Lame Vulcan laboring o'er the palace-floor.
An inextinguishable laughter broke
From all the blessed gods. So feasted they
All day till sunset. From that equal feast
None stood aloof, nor from the pleasant sound

755

760

Of harp, which Phœbus touched, nor from the voice
Of Muses singing sweetly in their turn.

But when the sun's all-glorious light was down, 763
Each to his sleeping-place betook himself;
For Vulcan, the lame god, with marvellous art,
Had framed for each the chamber of his rest.

And Jupiter, the Olympian Thunderer,
Went also to his couch, where 't was his wont, 770
When slumber overtook him, to recline.
And there, beside him, slept the white-armed queen
Juno, the mistress of the golden throne.

BOOK II.

ALL other deities, all mortal men,
Tamers of war-steeds, slept the whole night through,
But no sweet slumber came to Jove; his thoughts
Were ever busy with the anxious care
To crown with honor Peleus' son, and cause
Myriads to perish at the Grecian fleet.

At last, this counsel seemed the best,—to send
A treacherous dream to Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus. Then he called a Dream, and thus
Addressing it with winged words, he said:—

“Go, fatal Vision, to the Grecian fleet,
And, entering Agamemnon's tent, declare
Faithfully what I bid thee. Give command
That now he arm, with all the array of war,
The long-haired Greeks, for lo, the hour is come
That gives into his hands the city of Troy
With all its spacious streets. The powers who dwell
In the celestial mansions are no more

At variance; Juno's prayers have moved them all,
And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom." 20

So spake the God; the Vision heard, and went
At once to where the Grecian barks were moored,
And entered Agamemnon's tent and found
The king reposing, with the balm of sleep
Poured all around him. At his head the Dream 25
Took station in the form of Neleus' son,
Nestor, whom Agamemnon honored most
Of all the aged men. In such a shape
The heaven-sent Dream to Agamemnon spake:—

"O warrior-son of Atreus, sleepest thou? 30
Tamer of steeds! It ill becomes a chief,
Who has the charge of nations and sustains
Such mighty cares, to sleep the livelong night.
Give earnest heed to me, for I am come
A messenger from Jove, who, though far off, 35
Takes part in thy concerns and pities thee.
He bids thee arm, with all the array of war,
The long-haired Greeks, for now the hour is come
Which gives into thy hands the city of Troy
With all its spacious streets. The powers that dwell 40
In the celestial mansions are no more
At variance; Juno's prayers have moved them all,

And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom,
Decreed by Jove. Bear what I say in mind,
And when thy sleep departs forget it not."

48

He spake, and, disappearing, left the king
Musing on things that never were to be;
For on that very day he thought to take
The city of Priam. Fool! who little knew
What Jupiter designed should come to pass,
And little thought by his own act to bring
Great woe and grief on Greeks and Trojans both
In hard-fought battles. From his sleep he woke,
The heavenly voice still sounding in his ears,
And sat upright, and put his tunic on,
Soft, fair, and new, and over that he cast
His ample cloak, and round his shapely feet
Laced the becoming sandals. Next, he hung
Upon his shoulders and his side the sword
With silver studs, and took into his hand
The ancestral sceptre, old, but undecayed,
And with it turned his footsteps toward the fleet
Of the Achaian warriors brazen-mailed.

50

55

60

Now Dawn, the goddess, climbed the Olympian height,
Foretelling Day to Jupiter and all
The immortal gods, when Agamemnon bade

65

The shrill-voiced heralds call the long-haired Greeks
Together; they proclaimed his will, and straight
The warriors came in throngs. But first he bade
A council of large-minded elders meet 70
On Pylian Nestor's royal bark, and there
Laid his well-pondered thought before them thus:—

“My friends, give ear: a Vision from above
Came to me sleeping in the balmy night;
Most like to noble Nestor was its look,— 75
Its face, its stature, and its garb. It stood
Beside me at my head, and thus it spake:—

““O warrior-son of Atreus, sleepest thou?
Tamer of steeds! It ill becomes a chief,
Who has the charge of nations and sustains 80
Such mighty cares, to sleep the livelong night.
Give earnest heed to me, for I am come
A messenger from Jove, who, though far off,
Takes part in thy concerns and pities thee.
He bids thee arm, with all the array of war, 85
The long-haired Greeks, for now the hour is come
Which gives into thy hands the city of Troy
With all its spacious streets. The powers who dwell
In the celestial mansions are no more
At variance; Juno's prayers have moved them all, 90

And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom,
Decreed by Jove. Bear what I say in mind.'

"It spake and passed away, and with it fled
My slumbers. Now must we devise a way
To bring into the field the sons of Greece. 95
I first will try, as best I may, with words,
And counsel flight from Troy with all our ships.
Ye each, with different counsels, do your part."

He spake, and took his seat, and after him
Nestor, the king of sandy Pylus, rose, 100
With well-considered words. "O friends," he said,
"Leaders and princes of the Grecian race,
Had any other of the Argive host
Related such a dream, we should have said
The tale is false, and spurned the counsel given. 105
But he has seen it who in rank and power
Transcends us all, and ours it is to see
How we may arm for war the sons of Greece."

He spake, and left the council, and the rest,
All sceptred kings, arose, prepared to obey 110
The shepherd of the people. All the Greeks
Meanwhile came thronging to the appointed place.
As, swarming forth from cells within the rock,
Coming and coming still, the tribe of bees

Fly in a cluster o'er the flowers of spring, 115
And some are darting out to right and left,
So from the ships and tents a multitude
Along the spacious beach, in mighty throngs,
Moved toward the assembly. Rumor went with them,
The messenger of Jove, and urged them on. 120
And now, when they were met, the place was stunned
With clamor; earth, as the great crowd sat down,
Groaned under them; a din of mingled cries
Arose; nine shouting heralds strove to hush
The noisy crowd to silence, that at length 125
The heaven-descended monarchs might be heard.

And when the crowd was seated and had paused
From clamor, Agamemnon rose. He held
The sceptre; Vulcan's skill had fashioned it,
And Vulcan gave it to Saturnian Jove,
And Jove bestowed it on his messenger, 130
The Argus-queller Hermes. He in turn
Gave it to Pelops, great in horsemanship;
And Pelops passed the gift to Atreus next,
The people's shepherd. Atreus, when he died,
Bequeathed it to Thyestes, rich in flocks; 135
And last, Thyestes left it to be borne
By Agamemnon, symbol of his rule
O'er many isles and all the Argive realm.
Leaning on this, he spake these winged words:—

“Friends, Grecian heroes, ministers of Mars, 140
Saturnian Jove hath in an evil net
Entangled me most cruelly. He gave
His promise and his nod, that, having razed
Troy with her strong defences, I should see
My home again; but now he meditates 145
To wrong me, and commands me to return,
With lessened glory and much people lost,
To Argos. Thus hath it seemed good to Jove
The mighty, who hath overthrown the towers
Of many a city, and will yet o’erthrow. 150
The ages yet to come will hear with shame
That such a mighty army of the Greeks
Have waged a fruitless war, and fought in vain
A foe less numerous; yet no end appears
To this long strife. Should Greeks and Trojans make 155
A treaty, faithfully to number each,
And should the Trojans count their citizens,
And we the Greeks, disposed in rows of tens,
Should call the Trojans singly to pour out
The wine for us, full many a company 160
Of ten would lack its cup-bearer; so far,
I judge, the sons of Greece outnumber those
Who dwell in Troy. But they have yet allies

Book II.

41

From many a city, men who wield the spear,
Withstanding my attempt to overthrow 165
That populous town. Nine years of mighty Jove
Have passed already, and the planks that form
Our barks are mouldering, and the cables drop
In pieces, and our wives within their homes,
With their young children, sit expecting us; 170
Yet is the enterprise for which we came
Still unperformed. Now let us all obey
The mandate I reveal, and hasten hence,
With all our fleet, to our beloved homes;
For Troy with her broad streets we cannot take." 175

He spake, and in the bosoms of the crowd
Stirred every heart; even those who heard him not
Were moved: the assembly wavered to and fro
Like the long billows of the Icarian Sea,
Roused by the East wind and the South, that rush 180
Forth from the cloudy seat of Father Jove;
Or like the harvest-field, when west winds stoop
Suddenly from above, and toss the wheat.
So was the whole assembly swayed; they ran
With tumult to the ships; beneath their feet 185
Rose clouds of dust, and each exhorted each
To seize the ships and drag them to the deep.

They cleared the channels mid the clamorous cries
Of multitudes, who hastened to return,
And drew the props from underneath their barks.

198

Then had the Greeks returned before their time
If Juno had not to Minerva said:—

“Unconquerable child of Jove! What change
Is this? Shall then the Argive army thus
Flee to their homes across the deep and leave
Glory to Priam, and to Ilium's sons
The Argive Helen, for whose sake have died
So many Greeks upon the Trojan strand,
Far from the land they loved? But hasten thou
To the host of Argive warriors mailed in brass,
And with persuasive words restrain their men.
Nor let them launch their barks upon the sea.”

199

200

She spake; nor did the blue-eyed Pallas fail
To heed the mandate, but with quick descent
She left the Olympian height and suddenly
Stood by the swift ships of the Grecian host.
She found Ulysses there, the man endowed
With wisdom like to Jove's; he had not touched
His well-appointed bark, for grief had seized
The hero's heart. The blue-eyed goddess took
Her place beside him, and addressed him thus:—

205

210

“Son of Laertes, nobly born and sage
Ulysses, will ye, entering your good ships,
Return in flight to your own land and leave
Glory to Priam, and to Ilium’s sons 215
The Argive Helen, for whose sake have died
So many Greeks upon the Trojan strand,
Far from the land they loved? Go thou at once
And seek the Argive warriors and restrain
With thy persuasive words the impatient men, 220
Nor let them launch their well-appointed ships.”

She spake; Ulysses knew the heavenly voice,
And hastened back, and as he ran cast by
His cloak. Eurybates of Ithaca,
The herald, caught it as he followed him. 225
And now before Atrides, king of men,
The warrior stood, and from his hand received
The ancestral sceptre, old, but undecayed;
And bearing this, he went among the ships
Which brought the Achaian army, mailed in brass; 230
And whomsoe’er he met upon his way,
Monarch or eminent among the host,
He stopped him, and addressed him blandly, thus:—

“Good friend, this eager haste as if from fear
Befits thee not. Sit down, and cause the rest 235

To sit. What Agamemnon's will may be
 Thou canst not yet be certain; he intends
 To try the Greeks, and soon will punish those
 Who act amiss. We cannot all have heard
 What he has said; beware, then, lest his wrath 240
 Fall heavily upon the sons of Greece.

The monarch, foster-child of Jupiter,
 Is terrible enraged. Authority
 Is given by Jove, all-wise, who loves the king."

But when he found one of the lower sort 245
 Shouting and brawling, with the royal wand
 He smote him, and reproved him sharply, thus:—

"Friend, take thy seat in quiet, and attend
 To what thy betters say; thou art not strong
 Nor valiant, and thou art of mean repute 250
 In combat and in council. We, the Greeks,
 Cannot be all supreme in power. The rule
 Of the many is not well. One must be chief
 In war, and one the king, to whom the son
 Of Saturn gives the sceptre, making him 255
 The lawgiver, that he may rule the rest."

Thus did he act the chief, and make the host
 Obey his word; they to the council ground
 Came rushing back from all the ships and tents

With tumult, as, on the long-stretching shore 260
Of ocean many-voiced, his billows fling
Themselves in fury, and the deep resounds.

All others took their seats and kept their place;
Thersites only, clamorous of tongue,
Kept brawling. He, with many insolent words, 265
Was wont to seek unseemly strife with kings,
Uttering whate'er it seemed to him might move
The Greeks to laughter. Of the multitude
Who came to Ilium, none so base as he, —
Squint-eyed, with one lame foot, and on his back 270
A lump, and shoulders curving towards the chest;
His head was sharp, and over it the hairs
Were thinly scattered. Hateful to the chiefs
Achilles and Ulysses, he would oft
Revile them. He to Agamemnon now 275
Called with shrill voice and taunting words. The Greeks
Heard him impatiently, with strong disgust
And vehement anger, yet he shouted still
To Agamemnon, and kept railing on: —

“Of what dost thou complain; what wouldst thou more,
Atrides? In thy tents are heaps of gold; 281
Thy tents are full of chosen damsels, given
To thee before all others, by the Greeks,

●

Whene'er we take a city. Dost thou yet
Hanker for gold, brought by some Trojan knight, 285
A ransom for his son, whom I shall lead —
I, or some other Greek — a captive bound?
Or dost thou wish, for thy more idle hours,
Some maiden, whom thou mayst detain apart?
Ill it beseems a prince like thee to lead 290
The sons of Greece, for such a cause as this,
Into new perils. O ye coward race!
Ye abject Greeklings, Greeks no longer, haste
Homeward with all the fleet, and let us leave
This man at Troy to win his trophies here, 295
That he may learn whether the aid we give
Avails him aught or not, since he insults
Achilles, a far braver man than he,
And takes from him by force and holds his prize.
And yet, Achilles is not moved by this
To anger: he is spiritless, or else, 300
Atrides, this injustice were thy last."

Taunting the shepherd of the people thus,
Thersites shouted to the king of men.
But great Ulysses, coming quickly up,
Rebuked him with a frown: "Thou garrulous wretch!
Glib as thou art of tongue, Thersites, cease, 306
Nor singly dare to seek dispute with kings.

There came, I deem, no viler wretch than thou
To Troy with Agamemnon. Prate no more
Of kings, reviling them, and keeping watch 310
For pretexts to return. We know not yet
Whether to go or to remain were best.
Thou railest at the shepherd of the host,
Atrides Agamemnon, for thou seest
The Grecian heroes load him with rewards, 315
While thou insultest him with scurrilous words.
I tell thee now,—and I shall keep my word,—
If e'er again I find thee railing on,
As now thou dost, then let Ulysses wear
His head no longer, let me not be called 320
The father of Telemachus, if I
Shall fail to seize thee, and to strip thee bare
Of cloak and tunic, and whatever else
Covers thy carcass, and to send thee forth,
Howling, to our swift barks' upon the shore, 325
Scourged from the council with a storm of blows.'

He spake, and with his sceptre smote the back
And shoulders of the scoffer, who crouched low
And shed a shower of tears. A bloody welk
Rose where the golden sceptre fell. He took 330
His scat, dismayed, and still in pain wiped off

The tears from his smutched face. The multitude
Around him, though in anxious mood, were moved
To smiles, and one addressed his neighbor thus:—

“Strange that Ulysses does a thousand things 335
So well,—so wise in council, and in war
So brave; and for the Grecian army now
He does the best of all, in silencing
The chatter of this saucy slanderer,
Whose acrid temper will not soon again 340
Move him to rail with insolent speech at kings.”

So talked the multitude. Ulysses then,
Holding the sceptre, rose, and by his side
The blue-eyed Pallas, in a herald's form,
Commanded silence, that the Argive host— 345
The mightiest and the meanest—might attend
To what should now be said, and calmly weigh
The counsel given them. With a prudent art
Ulysses framed his speech, and thus he spake:—

“The Greeks, O Atreus' son, would bring on thee 350
Dishonor in the eyes and speech of men,
Breaking the promise made when first they came
From Argos, famed for steeds, that, having spoiled
This well-defended Troy, thou shouldst return
A conqueror. And now, like tender boys 355

Or widowed women, all give way to grief
And languish to return. 'T were hard to bear
If, after all our sufferings and our toils,
We go back now. And yet, whoe'er remains
A single month away from wife and home 360
Chafes if the winter storms and angry sea
Detain him still on board his well-oared bark ;
And we have seen the ninth full year roll round
Since we came hither. Therefore blame I not
The Greeks if they in their beaked ships repine 365
At this delay. But then it were disgrace
To linger here so long and journey home
With empty hands. Bear with us yet, and wait
Till it be certain whether Calchas speaks
Truly or not. For we remember well, 370
And all of you whom cruel death has spared
Are witnesses with me, that when the ships
Of Greece—it seems as if but yesterday—
Mustered in Aulis on their way to bring
Woe upon Priam and the town of Troy, 375
And we, beside a fountain, offered up
On sacred altars chosen hecatombs,
Under a shapely plane-tree, from whose root
Flowed the clear water, there appeared to us

A wondrous sign. A frightful serpent, marked 380
 With crimson spots, which Jupiter sent forth
 To daylight from beneath the altar-stone,
 Came swiftly gliding toward the tree, whereon
 A sparrow had her young—eight unfledged birds—
 Upon the topmost bough and screened by leaves; 385
 The mother was the ninth. The serpent seized
 The helpless brood and midst their piteous cries
 Devoured them, while the mother fluttered round,
 Lamenting, till he caught her by the wing;
 And when he had destroyed the parent bird 390
 And all her brood, the god who sent him forth
 Made him a greater marvel still. The son
 Of crafty Saturn changed the snake to stone;
 And we who stood around were sore amazed.
 Such was the awful portent which the gods 395
 Showed at that sacrifice. But Calchas thus
 Instantly spake, interpreting the sign:—

“‘O long-haired Greeks,’ he said, ‘why stand ye thus
 In silence? All-foreseeing Jupiter
 Hath sent this mighty omen; late it comes 400
 And late will be fulfilled, yet gloriously,
 And with a fame that never shall decay.
 For as the snake devoured the sparrow’s brood,

Eight nestlings, and the mother-bird the ninth, —
So many years the war shall last; the tenth 405
Shall give into our hands the stately 'Troy.'

"So spake the seer; thus far his words are true.
Bide ye then here, ye well-greaved sons of Greece,
Until the city of Priam shall be ours."

He spake, and loud applause thereon ensued 410
From all the Greeks, and fearfully the ships
Rang with the clamorous voices uttering
The praises of Ulysses and his words.

Then Nestor, the Gerenian knight, arose
And thus addressed them: "Strangely ye behave, 415
Like boys unwonted to the tasks of war.

Where now are all your promises and oaths?
Shall all our counsellings and all our cares,
Leagues made with wine, religiously outpoured,
And plightings of the strong right hand, be cast 420
Into the flames? Idly we keep alive

A strife of words, which serves no end though long
We loiter here! But thou, Atrides, firm
Of purpose, give command that now the Greeks
Move to the war, and leave to meet their fate 425

Those — one or more — who, parting from our host,
Meditate — but I deem in vain — to flee

Homeward to Argos ere they are assured
Whether the word of Jove omnipotent
Be false or true. For when the Greeks embarked 430
In their swift ships, to carry death and fate
To Ilium's sons, almighty Jupiter
Flung down his lightnings on the right and gave
Propitious omens. Therefore let no Greek
Go home till he possess a Trojan wife 435
And ye have signally avenged the wrongs
And griefs of Helen. Yet, if one be here
Who longs to go, let him but lay his hand
On his black ship, prepared to cross the deep,
And he shall die before the rest. But thou, 440
O king, be wisely counselled, lend an ear
To others, nor neglect what I propose.
Marshal the Greeks by tribes and brotherhoods,
That tribe may stand by tribe, and brotherhoods
Succor each other; if thou thus command 445
And they obey, thou shalt discern which chief
Or soldier is faint-hearted, which is brave,
For each will fight his best, and thou shalt know
Whether through favor of the gods to Troy,
Or our own cowardice and shameful lack 450
Of skill in war, the town is not o'erthrown."

In turn the monarch Agamemnon spake:—
“O aged warrior, thou excellest all
The Greeks in council. Would to Jupiter,
To Pallas and Apollo, that with me 455
There were but ten such comrades. Priam’s town
Would quickly fall before us and be made
A desolation. But the god who bears
The ægis, Saturn’s son, hath cast on me
Much grief, entangling me in idle strifes 460
And angry broils. Achilles and myself
Have quarrelled for a maid with bitter words,
And I was first incensed. But if again
We meet and act as friends, the overthrow
That threatens Ilium will not be delayed,— 465
Not for an hour. Now all to your repast!
And then prepare for battle. First let each
See that his spear be sharp, and put his shield
In order, give to his swift-footed steeds
Their ample forage, and o’erlook his car 470
That it be strong for war; for all the day
Shall we maintain the stubborn fight, nor cease
Even for a moment, till the night come down
To part the wrathful combatants. The band
Of each broad buckler shall be moist with sweat 475

On every breast, and weary every arm
That wields the spear, and every horse that drags
The polished chariot o'er the field shall smoke
With sweat. But whosoever shall be found
By the beaked ships and skulking from the fray 480
Shall be the feast of birds of prey and dogs!"

He spake; the Argives raised a mighty shout,
Loud as when billows lash the beetling shore,
Rolled by the south wind toward some jutting rock
On which the waves, whatever wind may blow, 485
Beat ceaselessly. In haste the people rose
And went among the ships, and kindled fires
Within their tents and took their meal. And one
Made offerings to one god; another paid
Vows to another of the immortal race; 490
And all implored deliverance from death
And danger. Agamemnon, king of men,
Offered a fatted ox of five years old
To Jupiter Almighty, summoning
The elder princes of the Grecian host, — 495
Nestor the first, the king Idomeneus,
And then the warriors Ajax and the son
Of Tydeus, with Ulysses, like to Jove
In council, sixth and last. Unbidden came

The valiant Menelaus, for he knew 500
The cares that weighed upon his brother's heart.
Then, as they stood around the fatted ox
And took in hand the salted barley-meal,
King Agamemnon in the circle prayed:—

“O Jove, most great and glorious! who dost rule 505
The tempest,—dweller of the ethereal space!
Let not the sun go down and night come on
Ere I shall lay the halls of Priam waste
With fire, and give their portals to the flames,
And hew away the coat of mail that shields 510
The breast of Hector, splitting it with steel.
And may his fellow-warriors, many a one,
Fall round him to the earth and bite the dust.”

He spake; the son of Saturn hearkened not,
But took the sacrifice and made more hard 515
The toils of war. And now when they had prayed,
And strown the salted meal, they drew the neck
Of the victim back and cut the throat and flayed
The carcass, hewed away the thighs and laid
The fat upon them in a double fold, 520
On which they placed raw strips of flesh, and these
They burned with leafless billets. Then they fixed
The entrails on the spits and held them forth

Above the flames, and when the thighs were burned
And entrails tasted, all the rest was carved 525
Into small portions and transfix'd with spits
And roasted carefully and drawn away.
And when these tasks were finished and the board
Was spread, they feasted; from that equal feast
None went unsated. When they had appeased 530
Their thirst and hunger, the Gerenian knight
Nestor stood forth and spake: "Most glorious son
Of Atreus, Agamemnon, king of men!
Waste we no time in prattle, nor delay
The work appointed by the gods, but send 535
The heralds of the Achæians, brazen-mailed,
To call the people to the fleet, while we
Pass in a body through their vast array
And wake the martial spirit in their breasts."
He spake, and Agamemnon, king of men, 540
Followed the counsel. Instantly he bade
The loud-voiced herald summon to the war
The long-haired Argives. At the call they came,
Quickly they came together, and the kings,
Nurslings of Jupiter, who stood beside 545
Atrides, hastened through the crowd to form
The army into ranks. Among them walked

The blue-eyed Pallas, bearing on her arm
The priceless ægis, ever fair and new,
And undecaying; from its edge there hung 550
A hundred golden fringes, fairly wrought,
And every fringe might buy a hecatomb.
With this and fierce, defiant looks she passed
Through all the Achaian host, and made their hearts
Impatient for the march and strong to endure 555
The combat without pause,—for now the war
Seemed to them dearer than the wished return,
In their good galleys, to the land they loved.

As when a forest on the mountain-top
Is in a blaze with the devouring flame 560
And shines afar, so, while the warriors marched,
The brightness of their burnished weapons flashed
On every side and upward to the sky.

And as when water-fowl of many tribes—
Geese, cranes, and long-necked swans—disport themselves
In Asia's fields beside Cayster's streams, 566
And to and fro they fly with screams, and light,
Flock after flock, and all the fields resound;
So poured, from ships and tents, the swarming tribes
Into Scamander's plain, where fearfully 570
Earth echoed to the tramp of steeds and men;

And there they mustered on the river's side,
Numberless as the flowers and leaves of spring.
And as when flies in swarming myriads haunt
The herdsman's stalls in spring-time, when new milk 575
Has filled the pails, — in such vast multitudes
Mustered the long-haired Greeks upon the plain,
Impatient to destroy the Trojan race.

Then, as the goatherds, when their mingled flocks
Are in the pastures, know and set apart 580
Each his own scattered charge, so did the chiefs,
Moving among them, marshal each his men.
There walked King Agamemnon, like to Jove
In eye and forehead, with the loins of Mars,
And ample chest like him who rules the sea. 585
And as a bull amid the hornèd herd
Stands eminent and nobler than the rest,
So Jove to Agamemnon on that day
Gave to surpass the chiefs in port and mien.

O Muses, goddesses who dwell on high, 590
Tell me, — for all things ye behold and know,
While we know nothing and may only hear
The random tales of rumor, — tell me who
Were chiefs and princes of the Greeks; for I
Should fail to number and to name them all, — 595
Had I ten tongues, ten throats, a voice unapt

To weary, uttered from a heart of brass, —
 Unless the Muses aided me. I now
 Will sing of the commanders and the ships.

Peneleus, Prothoënor, Leïtus, 600
 And Clonius, and Arcesilaus led
 The warriors of Bœotia, all who dwelt
 In Hyria and in rocky Aulis, all
 From Schoënus and from Scolus and the hill
 Of Eteonus and Thespeia's fields, 605
 And Graia and the Mycalesian plain,
 All who from Herma and Ilesius came,
 And Erythræ, and those who had their homes
 In Eleon, Hyla, and Ocalea,
 And Peteona, and the stately streets 610
 Of Medeon, Copæ, Thisbè full of doves,
 And those whose dwelling-place was Eutresis,
 And Coronæa, and the grassy lawns
 Of Haliartus, all the men who held
 Platæa, or in Glissa tilled the soil, 615
 Or dwelt in Hypothebæ nobly built,
 Or in Onchestus with its temple-walls
 Sacred to Neptune, or inhabited
 Arnè with fruitful vineyards, Midea
 And Nyssa the divine, and Anthedon 620
 The distant, — fifty were their barks, and each

Held sixscore youths of the Bæotian race.

Next, over those who came from Aspledon

And from Orchomenus in Minyas

Ascalaphus ruled with his brother chief

625

Ialmenus,—two sons of mighty Mars.

These, in the halls of Actor, Azis' son,

Astyoche bore to the god of war,

Who met by stealth the bashful maid, as once

She sought the upper palace-rooms. Their ships

630

Were thirty, ranged in order on the shore.

Then Schedius and Epistrophus, two chiefs

Born to Iphitus, son of Naubolus

The large of soul, led the Phocæan host,

Those who in Cyparissus had their homes,

635

In Panope and Crissa the divine

And Daulis, or about Hyampolis

Anemoreia, and upon the banks

Of broad Cephissus, and with them the race

Who held Lilæa by Cephissus' springs.

640

With these came forty ships. Their leaders went

Among them, ranging them in due array

And close to the Bæotians on the left.

Ajax the swift of foot, Oileus' son,

Was leader of the Locrians,—less in limb

645

And stature than the other Ajax,—nay,

Much smaller than that son of Telamon,
Wearing a linen corselet; but to wield
The spear he far excelled all other men
Of Hellas and Achaia. Those who dwelt 650
In Cynus, Opus, Bessa, and the fields
Of Scarpha and Calliarus green
Augeia, Tarpha, and the meadows where
Boagrius waters Thronium, followed him
With forty dark-hulled Locrian barks, that came 655
From coasts beyond Eubœa's sacred isle.

The Eubœans breathing valor, they who held
Chalcis, Eretria, and the vineyard slopes
Of Histiaëa, and the lofty walls
Of Dium and Cerinthus by the sea, 660
And Styra, and Earystus; these obeyed
Elphenor of the line of Mars, and son
Of the large-souled Chalcodon, ruler o'er
The Abantes. Him with loosely-flowing locks
The Abantes followed, swift of foot and fierce 665
In combat, and expert to break the mail
Upon the enemies' breasts with ashen spears;
With forty dark-hulled barks they followed him.

Next they who came from Athens nobly built,
The city of Erechtheus, great of soul, 670
Son of the teeming Earth, whom Pallas reared,

That daughter of the Highest, and within
Her sumptuous temple placed him, where the sons
Of Athens, with the circling year's return,
Paid worship at her altars, bringing bulls 675
And lambs to lay upon them; these obeyed
Menestheus, son of Peteus, whom no chief
On earth could equal in the art to place
Squadrons of men and horse in due array
For battle. Nestor only sought to share 680
This praise, but Nestor was the elder chief.
Fifty dark galleys with Menestheus came.

Ajax had brought twelve ships from Salamis,
And these he stationed near the Athenian host.

But they who dwelt in Argos, or within 685
The strong-walled Tiryns, or Hermione
And Asine with their deep, sheltering bays,
Trœzene and Eïonæ, and hills
Of Epidaurus planted o'er with vines,
And they who tilled Ægina and the coast 690
Of Mases, — Grecian warriors, — over these
Brave Diomed bore sway, with Sthenelus,
Beloved son of far-famed Capaneus,
And, third in rule, Euryalus, who seemed
Like to a god, Mecisteus' royal son 695
Who sprung from Talaus; yet the chief command

Was given to Diomed, the great in war.
A fleet of eighty galleys came with them.

The dwellers of Mycenæ nobly built,
Of Corinth famed for riches, and the town 700
Of beautiful Cleonæ, they who tilled
Orneia, Aræthyrea's pleasant land,
And Sicyon, where of yore Adrastus reigned,
And Hyperesia and the airy heights
Of Gonoessa, and Pellenè's fields, 705
And they who came from Ægium and the shores
Around it, and broad lands of Helicè,—
These had a hundred barks, and over them
Atrides Agamemnon bore command;
And with him came the largest train of troops 710
And bravest. He was cased in gleaming mail,
And his heart gloried when he thought how high
He stood among the heroes,—mightier far
In power, and leader of a mightier host.

Then they who dwelt within the hollow vale 715
Of queenly Lacedæmon, they who held
Phare and Sparta, Messa full of doves,
Bryseia, and Augeia's rich domain,
Amyclæ and the town of Helos, built
Close to the sea, and those who had their homes 720

In Laäs and the fields of Ætylus;
All these obeyed the brother of the king,
The valiant Menelaus. Sixty ships
They brought, but these he ranged apart from those
Of Agamemnon. Through the ranks he went, 725
And, trusting in his valor, quickened theirs
For battle; for his heart within him burned
To avenge the wrongs of Helen and her tears.

Then came the men who tilled the Pylean coast
And sweet Arenè, Thrya at the fords 730
Of Alpheus, and the stately palace homes
Of Æpy, or in Cyparissus dwelt,
Or in Amphigeneia, Pteleum,
Helos and Dorium, where the Muses once
Met, journeying from Æcalian Eurytus, 735
The Thracian Thamyris, and took from him
His power of voice. For he had made his boast
To overcome in song the daughters nine
Of Jove the Ægis-bearer. They in wrath
Smote him with blindness, took the heavenly gift 740
Of song away, and made his hand forget
Its cunning with the harp. All those were led
By Nestor, the Gerenian knight, who came
To war on Troy with fourscore ships and ten.

The Arcadians, dwelling by the lofty mount
Cyllene, near the tomb of Epytus, 745
Warriors who combat hand to hand, and they
Who tilled the fields of Pheneus and possessed
Orchomenus with all its flocks, or dwelt
In Ripa and in Stratia, and the bleak 750
Enispe, beaten with perpetual winds,
And in Tegea, and the lovely land
Of Mantinea, and in Stymphalus
And in Parrhasia, came in sixty ships
To Troy, with Agapenor for their chief, 755
Son of Ancæus. Every ship was thronged
With warriors of Arcadia, for the king
Of men, Atrides, gave them well-oared barks
To cross the dark blue deep, since not to them
Pertained the cares and labors of the sea. 760

Then from Buprasium and the sacred coast
Of Elis, from Hyrmine and remote
Myrsinus and the Olenian precipice,
And from Alisium came, with chieftains four,
The warriors, ten swift galleys following 765
Each chieftain, crowded with Epean troops.
And part obeyed Amphimacus, the son
Of Cteatus, and part with Thalpius came,

The son of Eurytus Actorides,
And part with brave Diores, of the line
Of Amarynceus. Last, Polyxenus,
The godlike offspring of Agasthenes,
Whose father was Augeias, led the rest.

770

They from Dulichium and the Echinades,
Those holy isles descried from Elis o'er
The waters, had for leader Megas, brave
As Mars,—the son of Phyleus, dearly loved
By Jove. He left his father's house in wrath
And dwelt within Dulichium. With the troops
Of Megas came a fleet of forty ships.

775

780

Ulysses led the Cephallenian men,
Who dwelt in Ithaca, or whose abode
Was leafy Neritus, and those who came
From Crocyleia, and from Ægilips
The craggy, and Zacynthus, and the isle
Of Samos, and Epirus, and from all
The bordering lands. O'er these Ulysses ruled,
A chief like Jove in council, and with him
There came twelve galleys with their scarlet prows.

785

Then with the Ætolians came Andræmon's son
Thoas, their leader. With him were the men
Of Pleuron and Pylene, Olenus,

790

And Chalcis on the sea-coast and the rocks
 Of Calydon; for now no more the sons
 Of large-souled Æneus were alive on earth, 795
 Nor lived the chief himself, and in his tomb
 Was Meleager of the golden hair;
 And thus the Ætolian rule to Thoas came.
 A fleet of fourscore galleys followed him.

Idomeneus, expert to wield the spear, 800
 Commanded those of Crete, the men who dwelt
 In Cnosus or Gortyna, strongly walled
 Lyctus, Miletus, and the glimmering
 Lycastus, Phæstus, Rhytium's populous town,
 And all the warrior train inhabiting 805
 The hundred towns of Crete. Idomeneus
 The mighty spearman, and Meriones,
 Fierce as the god of war, commanded these,
 And came to Troy with eighty dark-ribbed barks.

Tlepolemus, a warrior of the stock 810
 Of Hercules, was leader of the troops
 Of Rhodes, and brought nine vessels to the war,
 Manned with the haughty Rhodians. These were ranged
 In threefold order: those of Lindus, those
 Who dwell in white Camirus, lastly those 815
 Of Ialassa. These Tlepolemus,

The valiant spearman, ruled. Astyoche
Bore him to mighty Hercules, who led
The maid from Ephyra, upon the banks
Of Selleis, to be his wife, what time 820
His valor had o'erthrown and made a spoil
Of many a city full of noble youths.
Tlepolemus, when in the palace-halls
He grew to manhood, slew an aged man,
An uncle of his father, whom he loved, 825
Lycimnius, of the line of Mars, and straight
He rigged a fleet of ships and led on board
A numerous host and fled across the sea.
For fearful were the threats of other sons
And grandsons of the mighty Hercules. 830
In Rhodes they landed after wanderings long
And many hardships. There they dwelt in tribes,—
Three tribes,—and were beloved of Jupiter,
The ruler over gods and men, who poured
Abundant riches on their new abode. 835

Nireus with three good ships from Syma came,—
Nireus, Aglaia's son by Charopus
The monarch,—Nireus who in comeliness
Surpassed all Greeks that came to Ilium, save
The faultless son of Peleus. Yet was he 840
Unwarlike and few people followed him.

The dwellers of Nisyrus, Crapathus,
And Cos, the city of Eurypylus,
Casus, and the Calydnian isles, obeyed
Phidippus and his brother Antiphus,
Sons of the monarch Thessalus, who sprang
From Hercules. With thirty ships they came.

845

But those who held Pelasgian Argos, those
Who dwelt in Alos, Trachys, Alope,
Phthia, and Hellas full of lovely dames, —
Named Myrmidons, Achaians, Hellenes, —
Achilles led their fifty ships; but they
Now heeded not the summons to the war,
For there was none to form their ranks for fight.
The great Achilles, swift of foot, remained
Within his ships, indignant for the sake
Of the fair-haired Briseis, whom he brought
A captive from Lyrnessus after toils
And dangers many. He had sacked and spoiled
Lyrnessus, and o'erthrown the walls of Thebes
And smitten Mynes and Epistrophus,
The warlike sons of King Evenus, sprung
From old Selapius. For this cause he kept
Within his ships, full soon to issue forth.

850

855

860

The men of Phylace, of Pyrasus, —

865

Sacred to Ceres and o'erspread with flowers,
And of Itona, mother of white flocks,
Antrona on the sea, and Pteleum green
With herbage, — over these while yet he lived
The brave Protesilaus ruled; but now 870
The dark earth covered him, and for his sake
His consort, desolate in Phylace,
Tore her fair cheeks, and all unfinished stood
His palace, for a Dardan warrior slew
Her husband as he leaped upon the land, 875
The foremost of the Achaians. Yet his troops
Were not without a leader, though they mourned
Their brave old chief. Podarces, loved by Mars, —
Son of Iphiclus, rich in flocks, who sprang
From Phylacus, — led them and formed their ranks. 880
A younger brother of the slain was he.
The slain was braver. Though the warriors grieved
To lose their glorious chief, they did not lack
A general. Forty dark ships followed him.
Then they who dwelt in Pheræ, by the lake 885
Bœbeis, and in Bœbe, Glaphyræ,
And nobly built Iolchos, came to Troy,
Filling eleven galleys, and obeyed
Eumelus, whom Alcestis the divine

Bore to Admetus,—fairest, she, of all
The house of Pelias and of womankind.

890

Those from Methonè and Olizon's rocks,
And Melibœa and Thaumacia, filled
Seven ships, with Philoctetes for their chief,
A warrior skilled to bend the bow. Each bark
Held fifty rowers, bowmen all, and armed
For stubborn battle. But their leader lay
Far in an island, suffering grievous pangs,—
The hallowed isle of Lemnos. There the Greeks
Left him, in torture from a venom'd wound
Made by a serpent's fangs. He lay and pined.
Yet was the moment near when they who thus
Forsook their king should think of him again.
Meantime his troops were not without a chief;
Though greatly they desired their ancient lord,
For now the base-born Medon marshalled them,
Son of Oïleus. Rhene brought him forth
To that destroyer of strong fortresses.

895

900

905

The men of Tricca and Ithome's hills,
And they who held Œchalia and the town
Of Eurytus the Œchalian, had for chiefs
Two sons of Æsculapius, healers both,
And skilful,—Podalirius one, and one
Machaon. Thirty hollow barks were theirs.

910

The dwellers of Ormenium, they whose homes 915
 Were by the Hyperian fount, and they
 Who held Asterium and the snowy peaks
 Of Titanus, obeyed Eurypylus,
 Evæmon's son, and far renowned. A fleet
 Of forty dark-ribbed vessels followed him. 920

Those who possessed Argissa, those who held
 Gyrtoné, Orthé, and Heloné, those
 Who dwelt in Oloösön with white walls,
 The sturdy warrior Polypætes led,
 Son of Pirithoüs, who derived his birth 925
 From deathless Jove. Hippodameia bore
 The warrior to Pirithoüs on the day
 When he took vengeance on the shaggy brood
 Of Centaurs, and from Pelion drove them forth
 To Æthicæ. Yet not alone in rule 930
 Was Polypætes, for Leonteus, sprung
 From the large-souled Coronus, Cæneus' son,
 Shared with him the command. With them a fleet
 Of forty dark-hulled vessels came to Troy.

Then Guneus came, with two and twenty ships 935
 From Cythus. Under his command he held
 The Enienes, and that sturdy race,
 The Peribœan warriors, and the men

Who built on cold Dodona, or who tilled
The fields where pleasant Titaresius flows 940
And into Peneus pours his gentle stream,
Yet with its silver eddies mingles not,
But floats upon the current's face like oil,—
A Stygian stream by which the immortals swear.

With Prothoüs, Tenthredon's son, there came 945
The warriors of Magnesia, who abode
By Peneus, and by Pelion hung with woods;
Swift-footed Prothoüs led these. They came
With forty dark-hulled galleys to the war.

These were the chiefs and princes of the Greeks. 950
Say, Muse, who most excelled among the kings,
And which the noblest steeds, of all that came
With the two sons of Atreus to the war?

The noblest steeds were those in Pheræ bred,
That, guided by Eumelus, flew like birds,— 955
Alike in hue and age; the plummet showed
Their height the same, and both were mares, and, reared
By Phæbus of the silver bow among
The meadows of Pieria, they became
The terror of the bloody battle-field. 960

The mightiest of the chiefs, while yet in wrath
Achilles kept aloof, was Ajax, son

Of Telamon ; yet was Pelides far
The greater warrior, and the steeds which bore
That perfect hero were of noblest breed. 965
In his beaked galleys, swift to cut the sea,
Achilles lay, meanwhile, and nursed the wrath
He bore to Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
The shepherd of the people. On the beach
His warriors took their sport with javelins 970
And quoits and bows, while near the chariots tied
The horses, standing, browsed on lotus-leaves
And parsley from the marshes. But beneath
The tents the closely covered chariots stood,
While idly through the camp the charioteers, 975
Hither and thither sauntering, missed the sight
Of their brave lord and went not to the field.

The army swept the earth as when a fire
Devours the herbage of the plains. The ground
Groaned under them as when the Thunderer Jove 980
In anger with his lightnings smites the earth
About Typhœus—where they say he lies—
In Arimi. So fearfully the ground
Groaned under that swift army as it moved.

Now to the Trojans the swift Iris came 985
A messenger from ægis-bearing Jove,

Tidings of bale she brought. They all had met —
Old men and youths—in council at the gates
Of Priam's mansion. There did Iris take
Her station near the multitude, and spake,
In voice and gesture like Polites, son
Of Priam, who, confiding in his speed,
Had stood a watcher for the sons of Troy
On aged Æsyeta's lofty tomb,
To give them warning when the Achaian host
Should issue from their galleys. Thus disguised,
Swift Iris spake her message from the skies:—

990

995

“Father! thou art delighted with much speech,
As once in time of peace, but now 't is war,
Inevitable war, and close at hand.

1000

I have seen many battles, yet have ne'er
Beheld such armies, and so vast as these,—
In number like the sands and summer leaves.
They march across the plain, prepared to give
Battle beneath the city walls. To thee,
O Hector, it belongs to heed my voice
And counsel. Many are the allies within
The walls of this great town of Priam, men
Of diverse race and speech. Let every chief
Of these array his countrymen for war,
And give them orders for the coming fight.”

1005

1010

She spake, and Hector heeded and obeyed
 The counsel of the goddess; he dismissed
 The assembly; all the Trojans rushed to arms,
 And all the gates were opened. Horse and foot
 Poured forth together in tumultuous haste.

1015

In the great plain before the city stands
 A mound of steep ascent on every side;
 Men named it Baticæ, but the gods
 Called it the swift Myrinna's tomb; and here
 Mustered the sons of Troy and their allies.

1020

Great Hector of the beamy helm, the son
 Of Priam, led the Trojan race. The host
 Of greatest multitude was marshalled there,
 And there the bravest, mighty with the spear.

1025

Æneas marshalled the Dardanian troops, —
 The brave son of Anchises. Venus bore
 The warrior to Anchises on the heights-
 Of Ida, where the mortal lover met
 The goddess. Yet he ruled them not alone;
 Two chiefs, Antenor's sons Archelochus
 And Acamas, were with him in command,
 Expert in all the many arts of war.

1030

The Trojans from Zeleia, opulent men,
 Who drank the dark Æsepus, — over these

1035

Ruled Pandarus, Lycaon's valiant son,
To whom the god Apollo gave his bow.

The troops fromAdrasteia, they who dwelt
Within Apæsus' walls, or tilled the soil
Of Pityeia and Tereia's heights,
Were led by Amphius and Adrastus, clad
In linen corselets for the war, the sons
Of Merops the Percosian, skilled beyond
All other men in the diviner's art.

1040

Nor would he that his sons should seek the field
Of slaughter. They obeyed him not; the fates
Decreed their early death and urged them on.

1045

The dwellers of Percote, Practium,
And Sestus, and Abydus, and divine
Arisba, followed Asius, great among
The heroes and the son of Hyrtacus,—
Asius, who came with strong and fiery steeds,
Borne from Arisba and from Selleis' banks.

1050

Hippochoüs over the Pelasgian tribes—
Skilled spearman, who abode among the fields
Of the deep-soiled Larissa—bore command,—
Hippochoüs with Pylæus, who derived
Their race from Mars, and for their father claimed
Pelasgian Lethus, son of Teutamus.

1055

And Acamas, and Peiroüs, valiant chief, 1060
Were captains of the Thracian men, whose fields
Were bounded by the rushing Hellespont.
Euphemus led the Cicones, expert
To wield the spear in fight. The nobly-born
Trœzenus was his father. Ceas' son 1065
Pyræchmes with Pæonia's archers came
From the broad Axius in far Amydon,—
Axius, the fairest river of the earth.

Pylæmenes, a chief of fearless heart,
Led from the region of the Eneti, 1070
Where first the stubborn race of mules was bred,
The Paphlagonian warriors, they who held
Cytorus, Sesamus, and fair abodes
Built where Parthenius wanders on, and those
Who dwelt in Cromna and Ægialus, 1075
And on the lofty Erythinian heights.

And Hodius and Epistrophus led on
The Halezonians from the distant land
Of Alyba, where ores of silver lie.
And Chromis and the augur Ennomus 1080
Were leaders of the Mysians; but his skill
Saved not the augur from the doom of death,
Slain by the swift of foot, Æacides,

With other men of Troy where Xanthus flows.

And Phorcys, and Ascanius, who was like

1085

A god in beauty, led the Phrygian troops

From far Ascania, eager for the fray.

And Antiphus and Mesthles were the chiefs

Of the Mæonian warriors, reared beside

The ships of Tmolus. There Gygæa's lake

1090

Brought forth both chieftains to Pylæmenes.

Nastes was leader of the Carian troops,

Who spake in barbarous accents and possessed

Miletus and the leafy mountain heights

Where dwell the Phthirians, and Mæander's stream,

1095

And airy peaks of Mycalè. O'er these

Amphimachus and Nastes held command,—

Amphimachus and Nastes, far renowned

Sons of Nomion, him who, madly vain,

Went to the battle pranked like a young girl

1100

In golden ornaments. They spared him not

The bitter doom of death; he fell beneath

The hand of swift Æacides within

The river's channel. There the great in war,

Achilles, spoiled Nomion of his gold.

1105

Sarpedon and the noble Glaucus bore

Rule o'er the Lycians coming from afar,

Where eddying Xanthus runs through Lycia's meads.

BOOK III.

NOW when both armies were arrayed for war,
Each with its chiefs, the Trojan host moved on
With shouts and clang of arms, as when the cry
Of cranes is in the air, that, flying south
From winter and its mighty breadth of rain, 5
Wing their way over ocean, and at dawn
Bring fearful battle to the pigmy race,
Bloodshed and death. But silently the Greeks
Went forward, breathing valor, mindful still
To aid each other in the coming fray. 10

As when the south wind shrouds a mountain-top
In vapors that awake the shepherd's fear, —
A surer covert for the thief than night, —
And round him one can only see as far
As one can hurl a stone, — such was the cloud 15
Of dust that from the warriors' trampling feet
Rose round their rapid march and filled the air.
Now drew they near each other, face to face,

And Paris in the Trojan van pressed on,
In presence like a god. A leopard's hide 20
Was thrown across his shoulders, and he bore
A crooked bow and falchion. Brandishing
Two brazen-pointed javelins, he defied
To mortal fight the bravest of the Greeks.

Him Menelaus, loved of Mars, beheld 25
Advancing with large strides before the rest;
And as a hungry lion who has made
A prey of some large beast—a hornèd stag
Or mountain goat—rejoices, and with speed
Devours it, though swift hounds and sturdy youths 30
Press on his flank, so Menelaus felt
Great joy when Paris, of the godlike form,
Appeared in sight, for now he thought to wreak
His vengeance on the guilty one, and straight
Sprang from his car to earth with all his arms. 35

But when the graceful Paris saw the chief
Come toward him from the foremost ranks, his heart
Was troubled, and he turned and passed among
His fellow-warriors and avoided death.
As one, who meets within a mountain glade 40
A serpent, starts aside with sudden fright,
And takes the backward way with trembling limbs

And cheeks all white,—the graceful Paris thus
Before the son of Atreus shrank in fear,
And mingled with the high-souled sons of Troy. 45
Hector beheld and thus upbraided him
Harshly: “O luckless Paris, nobly formed,
Yet woman-follower and seducer! Thou
Shouldst never have been born, or else at best
Have died unwedded; better were it far, 50
Than thus to be a scandal and a scorn
To all who look on thee. The long-haired Greeks,
How they will laugh, who for thy gallant looks
Deemed thee a hero, when there dwells in thee
No spirit and no courage? Wast thou such 55
When, crossing the great deep in thy stanch ships
With chosen comrades, thou didst make thy way
Among a stranger-people and bear off
A beautiful woman from that distant land,
Allied by marriage-ties to warrior-men,— 60
A mischief to thy father and to us
And all the people, to our foes a joy,
And a disgrace to thee? Why couldst thou not
Await Atrides? Then hadst thou been taught
From what a valiant warrior thou didst take 65
His blooming spouse. Thy harp will not avail,

Nor all the gifts of Venus, nor thy locks,
Nor thy fair form, when thou art laid in dust.
Surely the sons of Troy are faint of heart,
Else hadst thou, for the evil thou hast wrought, 70
Been laid beneath a coverlet of stone."

Then Paris, of the godlike presence, spake
In answer: "Hector, thy rebuke is just;
Thou dost not wrong me. Dauntless is thy heart;
'T is like an axe when, wielded by the hand 75
That hews the shipwright's plank, it cuts right through,
Doubling the wielder's force. Such tameless heart
Dwells in thy bosom. Yet reproach me not
With the fair gifts which golden Venus gave.
Whatever in their grace the gods bestow 80
Is not to be rejected: 't is not ours
To choose what they shall give us. But if thou
Desirest to behold my prowess shown
In combat, cause the Trojans and the Greeks
To pause from battle, while, between the hosts, 85
I and the warlike Menelaus strive
In single fight for Helen and her wealth.
Whoever shall prevail and prove himself
The better warrior, let him take with him
The treasure and the woman, and depart; 90

While all the other Trojans, having made
A faithful league of amity, shall dwell
On Ilium's fertile plain, and all the Greeks
Return to Argos, famed for noble steeds,
And to Achaia, famed for lovely dames."

95

He spake, and Hector, hearing him, rejoiced,
And went between the hosts, and with his spear,
Held by the middle, pressed the phalanxes
Of Trojans back, and made them all sit down.
The long-haired Greeks meanwhile, with bended bows,
Took aim against him, just about to send
Arrows and stones; but Agamemnon, king
Of men, beheld, and thus he cried aloud:—

101

"Restrain yourselves, ye Argives; let not fly
Your arrows, ye Achaians; Hector asks—
He of the beamy helmet asks to speak."

105

He spake, and they refrained, and all, at once,
Were silent. Hector then stood forth and said:—

"Hearken, ye Trojans and ye nobly-armed
Achaians, to what Paris says by me.
He bids the Trojans and the Greeks lay down
Their shining arms upon the teeming earth,
And he and Menelaus, loved of Mars,
Will strive in single combat, on the ground

110

Between the hosts, for Helen and her wealth; 115
And he who shall o'ercome, and prove himself
The better warrior, to his home shall bear
The treasure and the woman, while the rest
Shall frame a solemn covenant of peace."

He spake, and both the hosts in silence heard. 120
Then Menelaus, great in battle, said:—

"Now hear me also,—me whose spirit feels
The wrong most keenly. I propose that now
The Greeks and Trojans separate reconciled,
For greatly have ye suffered for the sake 125
Of this my quarrel, and the original fault
Of Paris. Whomsoever fate ordains

To perish, let him die; but let the rest
Be from this moment reconciled, and part.
And bring an offering of two lambs—one white, 130
The other black—to Earth and to the Sun,
And we ourselves will offer one to Jove.

And be the mighty Priam here, that he
May sanction this our compact,—for his sons
Are arrogant and faithless,—lest some hand 135
Wickedly break the covenant of Jove.

The younger men are of a fickle mood;
But when an elder shares the act he looks

Both to the past and future, and provides
What is most fitting and the best for all."

140

He spake, and both the Greeks and Trojans heard
His words with joy, and hoped the hour was come
To end the hard-fought war. They reined their steeds
Back to the ranks, alighted, and put off
Their armor, which they laid upon the ground
Near them in piles, with little space between.

145

Then Hector sent two heralds forth with speed
Into the town, to bring the lambs and call
King Priam. Meanwhile Agamemnon bade
Talthybius seek the hollow ships and find
A lamb for the altar. He obeyed the words
Of noble Agamemnon, king of men.

150

Meanwhile to white-armed Helen Iris came
A messenger. She took a form that seemed
Laodice, the sister of Paris, whom
Antenor's son, King Helicaon, wed,—
Fairest of Priam's daughters. She drew near
To Helen, in the palace, weaving there
An ample web, a shining double-robe,
Whereon were many conflicts fairly wrought,
Endured by the horse-taming sons of Troy
And brazen-mailed Achaians for her sake

155

160

Upon the field of Mars. Beside her stood
Swift-footed Iris, and addressed her thus:—

“Dear lady, come and see the Trojan knights 165
And brazen-mailed Achaians doing things
To wonder at. They who, in this sad war,
Eager to slay each other, lately met
In murderous combat on the field, are now
Seated in silence, and the war hath ceased. 170
They lean upon their shields; their massive spears
Are near them, planted in the ground upright.
Paris, and Menelaus, loved of Mars,
With their long lances will contend for thee,
And thou wilt be declared the victor’s spouse.” 175

She said, and in the heart of Helen woke
Dear recollections of her former spouse
And of her home and kindred. Instantly
She left her chamber, robed and veiled in white,
And shedding tender tears; yet not alone, 180
For with her went two maidens,—Æthra, child
Of Pitheus, and the large-eyed Clymene.
Straight to the Scæan gates they walked, by which
Panthoüs, Priam, and Thymœtes sat,
Lampus and Clytius, Hicetaon sprung 185
From Mars, Antenor and Ucalegon,

Two sages, — elders of the people all.
Beside the gates they sat, unapt, through age,
For tasks of war, but men of fluent speech,
Like the cicadas that within the wood 190
Sit on the trees and utter delicate sounds.
Such were the nobles of the Trojan race
Who sat upon the tower. But when they marked
The approach of Helen, to each other thus
With winged words, but in low tones, they said: — 195
“Small blame is theirs, if both the Trojan knights
And brazen-mailed Achaians have endured
So long so many evils for the sake
Of that one woman. She is wholly like
In feature to the deathless goddesses. 200
So be it: let her, peerless as she is,
Return on board the fleet, nor stay to bring
Disaster upon us and all our race.”
So spake the elders. Priam meantime called
To Helen: “Come, dear daughter, sit by me. 205
Thou canst behold thy former husband hence,
Thy kindred and thy friends. I blame thee not;
The blame is with the immortals who have sent
These pestilent Greeks against me. Sit and name
For me this mighty man, the Grecian chief, 210

Gallant and tall. True, there are taller men;
But of such noble form and dignity
I never saw: in truth, a kingly man."

And Helen, fairest among women, thus
Answered: "Dear second father, whom at once 215
I fear and honor, would that cruel death
Had overtaken me before I left,
To wander with thy son, my marriage-bed,
And my dear daughter, and the company
Of friends I loved. But that was not to be; 220
And now I pine and weep. Yet will I tell
What thou dost ask. The hero whom thou seest
Is the wide-ruling Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus, and is both a gracious king
And a most dreaded warrior. He was once 225
Brother-in-law to me, if I may speak—
Lost as I am to shame—of such a tie."

She said, the aged man admired, and then
He spake again: "O son of Atreus, born
Under a happy fate, and fortunate 230
Among the sons of men! A mighty host
Of Grecian youths obey thy rule. I went
To Phrygia once,—that land of vines,—and there
Saw many Phrygians, heroes on fleet steeds,

The troops of Otreus, and of Mygdon, shaped 235
Like one of the immortals. They encamped
By the Sangarius. I was an ally;
My troops were ranked with theirs upon the day
When came the unsexed Amazons to war.
Yet even there I saw not such a host 240
As this of black-eyed Greeks who muster here."

Then Priam saw Ulysses, and inquired:—
"Dear daughter, tell me also who is that,
Less tall than Agamemnon, yet more broad
In chest and shoulders. On the teeming earth 245
His armor lies, but he, from place to place,
Walks round among the ranks of soldiery,
As when the thick-fleeced father of the flocks
Moves through the multitude of his white sheep."

And Jove-descended Helen answered thus:— 250
"That is Ulysses, man of many arts,
Son of Laertes, reared in Ithaca,
That rugged isle, and skilled in every form
Of shrewd device and action wisely planned."

Then spake the sage Antenor: "Thou hast said 255
The truth, O lady. This Ulysses once
Came on an embassy, concerning thee,
To Troy with Menelaus, great in war;

And I received them as my guests, and they
Were lodged within my palace, and I learned 260
The temper and the qualities of both.
When both were standing 'mid the men of Troy,
I marked that Menelaus's broad chest
Made him the more conspicuous, but when both
Were seated, greater was the dignity 265
Seen in Ulysses. When they both addressed
The council, Menelaus briefly spake
In pleasing tones, though with few words,—as one
Not given to loose and wandering speech,—although
The younger. When the wise Ulysses rose, 270
He stood with eyes cast down, and fixed on earth,
And neither swayed his sceptre to the right
Nor to the left, but held it motionless,
Like one unused to public speech. He seemed
An idiot out of humor. But when forth 275
He sent from his full lungs his mighty voice,
And words came like a fall of winter snow,
No mortal then would dare to strive with him
For mastery in speech. We less admired
The aspect of Ulysses than his words." 280

Beholding Ajax then, the aged king
Asked yet again: "Who is that other chief

Of the Achaïans, tall, and large of limb, —
Taller and broader-chested than the rest?"

Helen, the beautiful and richly-robed, 285
Answered: "Thou seest the mighty Ajax there,
The bulwark of the Greeks. On the other side,
Among his Cretans, stands Idomeneus,
Of godlike aspect, near to whom are grouped
The leaders of the Cretans. Oftentimes 290
The warlike Menelaus welcomed him
Within our palace, when he came from Crete.
I could point out and name the other chiefs
Of the dark-eyed Achaïans. Two alone,
Princes among their people, are not seen, — 295
Castor the fearless horseman, and the skilled
In boxing, Pollux, — twins; one mother bore
Both them and me. Came they not with the rest
From pleasant Lacedæmon to the war?
Or, having crossed the deep in their good ships, 300
Shun they to fight among the valiant ones
Of Greece, because of my reproach and shame?"

She spake; but they already lay in earth
In Lacedæmon, their dear native land.

And now the heralds through the city bore 305
The sacred pledges of the gods, — two lambs,

And joyous wine, the fruit of Earth, within
A goat-skin. One of them — Idæus — brought
A glistening vase and golden drinking-cups,
And summoned, in these words, the aged king: — 310

“Son of Laomedon, arise! The chiefs
Who lead the Trojan knights and brazen-mailed
Achaïans pray thee to descend at once
Into the plain, that thou may'st ratify
A faithful compact. Alexander now 315
And warlike Menelaus will contend
With their long spears for Helen. She and all
Her treasures are to be the conqueror's prize;
While all the other Trojans, having made
A faithful league of amity, shall dwell 320
On Ilium's fertile plain, and all the Greeks
Return to Argos, famed for noble steeds,
And to Achaia, famed for lovely dames.”

He spake, and Priam, shuddering, heard, and bade
The attendants yoke the horses to his car. 325
Soon were they yoked; he mounted first and drew
The reins; Antenor took a place within
The sumptuous car, and through the Scæan gates
They guided the fleet coursers toward the field.

Now when the twain had come where lay the hosts 330

Of Trojans and Achaians, down they stepped
Upon the teeming earth, and went among
The assembled armies. Quickly, as they came,
Rose Agamemnon, king of men, and next
Uprose the wise Ulysses. To the spot
The illustrious heralds brought the sacred things
That bind a treaty, and with mingled wine
They filled a chalice, and upon the hands
Of all the kings poured water. Then the son
Of Atreus drew a dagger which he wore
Slung by his sword's huge sheath, and clipped away
The forelocks of the lambs, and parted them.
Among the Trojan and Achaian chiefs,
And stood with lifted hands and prayed aloud:—

“O Father Jupiter, who rulest all
From Ida, mightiest, most august! and thou,
O all-beholding and all-hearing Sun!
Ye Rivers, and thou Earth, and ye who dwell
Beneath the earth and punish after death
Those who have sworn false oaths, bear witness ye,
And keep unbroken this day's promises.
If Alexander in the combat slay
My brother Menelaus, he shall keep
Helen and all her wealth, while we return

335

340

345

350

Homeward in our good ships. If, otherwise, 355
The bright-haired Menelaus take the life
Of Alexander, Helen and her wealth
Shall be restored, and they of Troy shall pay
Such fine as may be meet, and may be long
Remembered in the ages yet to come. 360
And then if, after Alexander's fall,
Priam and Priam's sons refuse the fine,
I shall make war for it, and keep my place
By Troy until I gain the end I seek."

So spake the king, and with the cruel steel 365
Cut the lambs' throats, and laid them on the ground,
Panting and powerless, for the dagger took
Their lives away. Then over them they poured
Wine from the chalice, drawn in golden cups,
And prayed to the ever-living gods; and thus 370
Were Trojans and Achaians heard to say:—

"O Jupiter most mighty and august!
Whoever first shall break these solemn oaths,
So may their brains flow down upon the earth,—
Theirs and their children's,—like the wine we pour, 375
And be their wives the wives of other men."

Such was the people's vow. Saturnian Jove
Confirmed it not. Then Priam, of the line
Of Dardanus, addressed the armies thus:—

“Hear me, ye Trojans, and ye well-greaved Greeks! 380
For me I must return to wind-swept Troy.
I cannot bear, with these old eyes, to look
On my dear son engaged in desperate fight
With Menelaus, the beloved of Mars.
Jove and the ever-living gods alone 385
Know which of them shall meet the doom of death.”

So spake the godlike man, and placed the lambs
Within his chariot, mounted, and drew up
The reins. Antenor by him took his place
Within the sumptuous chariot. Then they turned 390
The horses and retraced their way to Troy.

But Hector, son of Priam, and the great
Ulysses measured off a fitting space,
And in a brazen helmet, to decide
Which warrior first should hurl the brazen spear, 395
They shook the lots, while all the people round
Lifted their hands to heaven and prayed the gods;
And thus the Trojans and Achaïans said:—

“O Father Jove, who rulest from the top
Of Ida, mightiest one and most august! 400
Whichever of these twain has done the wrong,
Grant that he pass to Pluto’s dwelling, slain,
While friendship and a faithful league are ours.”

So spake they. Hector of the beamy helm
Looked back and shook the lots. Forth leaped at once
The lot of Paris. Then they took their seats 406
In ranks beside their rapid steeds, and where
Lay their rich armor. Paris the divine,
Husband of bright-haired Helen, there put on
His shining panoply, — upon his legs 410
Fair greaves, with silver clasps, and on his breast
His brother's mail, Lycaon's, fitting well
His form. Around his shoulders then he hung
His silver-studded sword, and stout, broad shield,
And gave his glorious brows the dreadful helm, 415
Dark with its horse-hair plume. A massive spear
Filled his right hand. Meantime the warlike son
Of Atreus clad himself in like array.

And now when both were armed for fight, and each
Had left his host, and, coming forward, walked 420
Between the Trojans and the Greeks, and frowned
Upon the other, a mute wonder held
The Trojan cavaliers and well-greaved Greeks.
There near each other in the measured space
They stood in wrathful mood with lifted spears. 425

First Paris hurled his massive spear; it smote
The round shield of Atrides, but the brass

Broke not beneath the blow; the weapon's point
Was bent on that strong shield. The next assault
Atrides Menelaus made, but first

430

Offered this prayer to Father Jupiter:—

“O sovereign Jove! vouchsafe that I avenge
On guilty Paris wrongs which he was first
To offer; let him fall beneath my hand,
That men may dread hereafter to requite
The friendship of a host with injury.”

435

He spake, and flung his brandished spear; it smote
The round shield of Priamides; right through
The shining buckler went the rapid steel,
And, cutting the soft tunic near the flank,
Stood fixed in the fair corselet. Paris bent
Sideways before it and escaped his death.

440

Atrides drew his silver-studded sword,
Lifted it high and smote his enemy's crest.
The weapon, shattered to four fragments, fell.

445

He looked to the broad heaven, and thus exclaimed:—

“O Father Jove! thou art of all the gods
The most unfriendly. I had hoped to avenge
The wrong by Paris done me, but my sword
Is broken in my grasp, and from my hand
The spear was vainly flung and gave no wound.”

450

He spake, and, rushing forward, seized the helm
Of Paris by its horse-hair crest, and turned
And dragged him toward the well-armed Greeks. Be-
neath

His tender throat the embroidered band that held 455
The helmet to the chin was choking him.

And now had Menelaus dragged him thence,
And earned great glory, if the child of Jove,
Venus, had not perceived his plight in time.

She broke the ox-hide band; an empty helm 460
Followed the powerful hand; the hero saw,
Swung it aloft and hurled it toward the Greeks,
And there his comrades seized it. He again
Rushed with his brazen spear to slay his foe.

But Venus—for a goddess easily 465
Can work such marvels—rescued him, and, wrapped

In a thick shadow, bore him from the field
And placed him in his chamber, where the air
Was sweet with perfumes. Then she took her way

To summon Helen. On the lofty tower 470
She found her, midst a throng of Trojan dames,

And plucked her perfumed robe. She took the form
And features of a spinner of the fleece,
An aged dame, who used to comb for her

The fair white wool in Lacedæmon's halls, 475
And loved her much. In such an humble guise
The goddess Venus thus to Helen spake:—

“Come hither, Alexander sends for thee;
He now is in his chamber and at rest
On his carved couch; in beauty and attire 480
Resplendent, not like one who just returns
From combat with a hero, but like one
Who goes to mingle in the choral dance,
Or, when the dance is ended, takes his seat.”

She spake, and Helen heard her, deeply moved; 485
Yet when she marked the goddess's fair neck,
Beautiful bosom, and soft, lustrous eyes,
Her heart was touched with awe, and thus she said:—

“Strange being! why wilt thou delude me still?
Wouldst thou decoy me further on among 490
The populous Phrygian towns, or those that stud
Pleasant Mæonia, where there haply dwells
Some one of mortal race whom thou dost deign
To make thy favorite. Hast thou seen, perhaps,
That Menelaus, having overpowered 495
The noble Alexander, seeks to bear
Me, hated as I must be, to his home?
And hast thou therefore fallen on this device?

Go to him, sit by him, renounce for him
The company of gods, and never more 500
Return to heaven, but suffer with him; watch
Beside him till he take thee for his wife
Or handmaid. Thither I shall never go,
To adorn his couch and to disgrace myself.
The Trojan dames would taunt me. O, the griefs 505
That press upon my soul are infinite!"

Displeased, the goddess Venus answered: "Wretch,
Incense me not, lest I abandon thee
In anger, and detest thee with a zeal
As great as is my love, and lest I cause 510
Trojans and Greeks to hate thee, so that thou
Shalt miserably perish." Thus she spake;
And Helen, Jove-begotten, struck with awe,
Wrapped in a robe of shining white, went forth
In silence from amidst the Trojan dames, 515
Unheeded, for the goddess led the way.

When now they stood beneath the sumptuous roof
Of Alexander, straightway did the maids
Turn to their wonted tasks, while she went up,
Fairest of women, to her chamber. There 520
The laughing Venus brought and placed a seat
Right opposite to Paris. Helen sat,

Daughter of ægiſ-bearing Jove, with eyes
Averted, and reproached her husband thus:—

“Com’st thou from battle? Rather would that thou
Hadst perished by the mighty hand of him 526
Who was my husband. It was once, I know,
Thy boast that thou wert more than peer in strength
And power of hand, and practice with the spear,
To warlike Menelaus. Go then now, 530
Defy him to the combat once again.
And yet I counsel thee to stand aloof,
Nor rashly seek a combat, hand to hand,
With fair-haired Menelaus, lest perchance
He smite thee with his spear and thou be slain.” 535

Then Paris answered: “Woman, chide me not
Thus harshly. True it is, that, with the aid
Of Pallas, Menelaus hath obtained
The victory; but I may vanquish him
In turn, for we have also gods with us. 540
Give we the hour to dalliance; never yet
Have I so strongly proved the power of love, —
Not even when I bore thee from thy home
In pleasant Lacedæmon, traversing
The deep in my good ships, and in the isle 545
Of Cranaë made thee mine, — such glow of love
Possesses me, and sweetness of desire.”

He spake, and to the couch went up; his wife
Followed, and that fair couch received them both.

Meantime Atrides, like a beast of prey, 550
Went fiercely ranging through the crowd in search
Of godlike Alexander. None of all
The Trojans, or of their renowned allies,
Could point him out to Menelaus, loved
Of Mars; and had they known his lurking-place 555
They would not for his sake have kept him hid,
For like black death they hated him. Then stood
Among them Agamemnon, king of men,
And spake: "Ye Trojans and Achaians, hear,
And ye allies. The victory belongs 560
To warlike Menelaus. Ye will then
Restore the Argive Helen and her wealth,
And pay the fitting fine, which shall remain
A memory to men in future times."

Thus spake the son of Atreus, and the rest 565
Of the Achaian host approved his words.

BOOK IV.

MEANTIME the immortal gods with Jupiter
Upon his golden pavement sat and held
A council. Hebe, honored of them all,
Ministered nectar, and from cups of gold
They pledged each other, looking down on Troy. 5
When, purposely to kindle Juno's mood
To anger, Saturn's son, with biting words
That well betrayed his covert meaning, spake:—

“Two goddesses—the Argive Juno one,
The other Pallas, her invincible friend— 10
Take part with Menelaus, yet they sit
Aloof, content with looking on, while still
Venus, the laughter-loving one, protects
Her Paris, ever near him, warding off
The stroke of fate. Just now she rescued him 15
When he was near his death. The victory
Belongs to Menelaus, loved of Mars.
Now let us all consider what shall be

The issue,—whether we allow the war,
With all its waste of life, to be renewed, 20
Or cause the warring nations to sit down
In amity. If haply it shall be
The pleasure and the will of all the gods,
Let Priam's city keep its dwellers still,
And Menelaus lead his Helen home.” 25

He spake, but Juno and Minerva sat,
And with closed lips repined, for secretly
They plotted evil for the Trojan race.
Minerva held her peace in bitterness
Of heart and sore displeased with Father Jove. 30
But Juno could not curb her wrath, and spake:—

“What words, austere Saturnius, hast thou said!
Wilt thou then render vain the toils I bear,
And all my sweat? My very steeds even now
Are weary with the mustering of the host 35
That threaten woe to Priam and his sons.
Yet do thy will; but be at least assured
That all the other gods approve it not.”

The cloud-compelling Jupiter replied
In anger: “Pestilent one! what grievous wrong 40
Hath Priam done to thee, or Priam's sons,
That thou shouldst persevere to overthrow

His noble city? Shouldst thou through the gates
Of Ilium make thy way, and there devour,
Within the ramparts, Priam and his sons 45
And all the men of Troy alive, thy rage
Haply might be appeased. Do as thou wilt,
So that this difference breed no lasting strife
Between us. Yet I tell thee this,—and thou
Bear what I say in mind: In time to come, 50
Should I design to level in the dust
Some city where men dear to thee are born,
Seek not to thwart my vengeance, but submit.
For now I fully yield me to thy wish,
Though with unwilling mind. Wherever dwell 55
The race of humankind beneath the sun
And starry heaven, of all their cities Troy
Has been by me most honored,—sacred Troy,—
And Priam, and the people who obey
Priam, the wielder of the ashen spear; 60
For there my altars never lacked their rites,—
Feasts, incense, and libations duly paid.”

Then Juno, the majestic, with large eyes,
Rejoined: “The cities most beloved by me
Are three,—Mycenæ, with her spacious streets, 65
Argos, and Sparta. Raze them to the ground,

If they be hateful to thee. I shall ne'er
Contend to save them, nor repine to see
Their fall; for, earnestly as I might seek
To rescue them from ruin, all my aid 70
Would not avail, so much the mightier thou.
Yet doth it ill become thee thus to make
My efforts vain. I am a goddess, sprung
From the same stock with thee; I am the child
Of crafty Saturn, and am twice revered, — 75
Both for my birth and that I am the spouse
Of thee who rulest over all the gods.
Now let us each yield somewhat, — I to thee
And thou to me; the other deathless gods
Will follow us. Let Pallas be despatched 80
To that dread battle-field on which are ranged
The Trojans and Achaians, and stir up
The Trojan warriors first to lift their hands
Against the elated Greeks and break the league.”
She ended, and the Father of the gods 85
And mortals instantly complied, and called
Minerva, and in wingèd accents said: —
“Haste to the battle-field, and there, among
The Trojan and Achaian armies, cause
The Trojan warriors first to lift their hands 90
Against the elated Greeks and break the league.”

So saying, Jupiter to Pallas gave
The charge she wished already. She in haste
Shot from the Olympian summits, like a star
Sent by the crafty Saturn's son to warn 95
The seamen or some mighty host in arms,—
A radiant meteor scattering sparkles round.
So came and lighted Pallas on the earth
Amidst the armies. All who saw were seized
With wonder,—Trojan knights and well-armed Greeks;
And many a one addressed his comrade thus: — 101

“Sure we shall have the wasting war again,
And stubborn combats; or, it may be, Jove,
The arbiter of wars among mankind,
Decrees that the two nations dwell in peace.” 105

So Greeks and Trojans said. The goddess went
Among the Trojan multitude disguised;
She seemed Laodocus, Antenor's son,
A valiant warrior, seeking through the ranks
For godlike Pandarus. At length she found 110
Lycaon's gallant and illustrious son,
Standing with bucklered warriors ranged around,
Who followed him from where Æsepus flows;
And, standing near, she spake these winged words:—

“Son of Lycaon! wilt thou hear my words, 115

Brave as thou art? Then wilt thou aim a shaft
At Menelaus; thus wilt thou have earned
Great thanks and praise from all the men of Troy,
And chiefly from Prince Paris, who will fill,
Foremost of all, thy hands with lavish gifts, 120
When he shall look on Menelaus slain —
The warlike son of Atreus — by thy hand,
And laid upon his lofty funeral pile.
Aim now at Menelaus the renowned
An arrow, while thou offerest a vow 125
To Lycian Phœbus, mighty with the bow,
That thou wilt bring to him a hecatomb
Of firstling lambs, when thou again shalt come
Within thine own Zeleia's sacred walls."

So spake Minerva, and her words o'ercame 130
The weak one's purpose. He uncovered straight
His polished bow, made of the elastic horns
Of a wild goat, which, from his lurking-place,
As once it left its cavern lair, he smote,
And pierced its breast, and stretched it on the rock. 135
Full sixteen palms in length the horns had grown
From the goat's forehead. These an artisan
Had smoothed, and, aptly fitting each to each,
Polished the whole and tipped the work with gold.

To bend that bow, the warrior lowered it 140
And pressed an end against the earth. His friends
Held up, meanwhile, their shields before his face,
Lest the brave sons of Greece should lift their spears
Against him ere the champion of their host,
The warlike Menelaus, should have felt 145
The arrow. Then the Lycian drew aside
The cover from his quiver, taking out
A well-fledged arrow that had never flown,—
A cause of future sorrows. On the string
He laid that fatal arrow, while he made 150
To Lycian Phœbus, mighty with the bow,
A vow to sacrifice before his shrine
A noble hecatomb of firstling lambs
When he should come again to his abode
Within his own Zeleia's sacred walls. 155
Grasping the bowstring and the arrow's notch,
He drew them back, and forced the string to meet
His breast, the arrow-head to meet the bow,
Till the bow formed a circle. Then it twanged.
The cord gave out a shrilly sound; the shaft 160
Leaped forth in eager haste to reach the host.
Yet, Menelaus, then the blessed gods,
The deathless ones, forgot thee not; and first,

Jove's daughter, gatherer of spoil, who stood
Before thee, turned aside the deadly shaft. 165
As when a mother, while her child is wrapped
In a sweet slumber, scares away the fly,
So Pallas turned the weapon from thy breast,
And guided it to where the golden clasps
Made fast the belt, and where the corselet's mail 170
Was doubled. There the bitter arrow struck
The belt, and through its close contexture passed,
And fixed within the well-wrought corselet stood,
Yet reached the plated quilt which next his skin
The hero wore,—his surest guard against 175
The weapon's force,—and broke through that alike;
And there the arrow gashed the part below,
And the dark blood came gushing from the wound.
As when some Carian or Mæonian dame
Tinges with purple the white ivory, 180
To form a trapping for the cheeks of steeds,—
And many a horseman covets it, yet still
It lies within her chamber, to become
The ornament of some great monarch's steed
And make its rider proud,—thy shapely thighs, 185
Thy legs, and thy fair ankles thus were stained,
O Menelaus! with thy purple blood.

When Agamemnon, king of men, beheld
The dark blood flowing from his brother's wound,
He shuddered. Menelaus, great in war, 190
Felt the like horror; yet, when he perceived
That still the arrow, neck and barb, remained
Without the mail, the courage rose again
That filled his bosom. Agamemnon, then,
The monarch, sighing deeply, took the hand 195
Of Menelaus,—while his comrades round
Like him lamented,—sighing as he spake:—

“Dear brother, when I sent thee forth alone
To combat with the Trojans for the Greeks,
I ratified a treaty for thy death,— 200
Since now the Trojans smite and under foot
Trample the league. Yet not in vain shall be
The treaty, nor the blood of lambs, nor wine
Poured to the gods, nor right hands firmly pledged;
For though it please not now Olympian Jove 205
To make the treaty good, he will in time
Cause it to be fulfilled, and they shall pay
Dearly with their own heads and with their wives
And children for this wrong. And this I know
In my undoubting mind,—a day will come 210
When sacred Troy and Priam and the race

Governed by Priam, mighty with the spear,
Shall perish all. Saturnian Jove, who sits
On high, a dweller of the upper air,
Shall shake his dreadful ægis in the sight 215
Of all, indignant at this treachery.
Such the event will be; but I shall grieve
Bitterly, Menelaus, if thou die,
Thy term of life cut short. I shall go back
To my dear Argos with a brand of shame 220
Upon me. For the Greeks will soon again
Bethink them of their country; we shall then
Leave Argive Helen to remain the boast
Of Priam and the Trojans,—while thy bones
Shall moulder, mingling with the earth of Tröy,— 225
Our great design abandoned. Then shall say
Some haughty Trojan, leaping on the tomb
Of Menelaus: ‘So in time to come
May Agamemnon wreak his wrath, as here
He wreaked it, whither he had vainly led 230
An army, and now hastens to his home
And his own land, with ships that bear no spoil,
And the brave Menelaus left behind.’
So shall some Trojan say; but, ere that time,
May the earth open to receive my bones!” 235

The fair-haired Menelaus cheerfully
Replied: "Grieve not, nor be the Greeks alarmed
For me, since this sharp arrow has not found
A vital part, but, ere it reached so far,
The embroidered belt, the quilt beneath, and plate 240
Wrought by the armorer's cunning, broke its force."

King Agamemnon took the word and said:—
"Dear Menelaus! would that it were so,
Yet the physician must explore thy wound,
And with his balsams soothe the bitter pain." 245
Then turning to Talthylus, he addressed
The sacred herald: "Hasten with all speed,
Talthylus; call Machaon, warrior-son
Of Æsculapius, that much-honored leech,
And bring him to the Achaian general, 250
The warlike Menelaus, whom some hand
Of Trojan or of Lycian, skilled to bend
The bow, hath wounded with his shaft,—a deed
For him to exult in, but a grief to us."

He spake; nor failed the herald to obey, 255
But hastened at the word and passed among
The squadrons of Achaia, mailed in brass,
In search of great Machaon. Him he found
As midst the valiant ranks of bucklered men

He stood,—the troops who followed him to war 260
From Triccæ, nurse of steeds. Then, drawing near,
The herald spake to him in wingèd words:—

“O son of Æsculapius, come in haste.
King Agamemnon calls thee to the aid
Of warlike Menelaus, whom some hand 265
Of Trojan or of Lycian, skilled to bend
The bow, hath wounded with his shaft,—a deed
For him to exult in, but a grief to us.”

Machaon's heart was touched, and forth they went
Through the great throng, the army of the Greeks. 270
And when they came where Atreus' warlike son
Was wounded, they perceived the godlike man
Standing amid a circle of the chiefs,
The bravest of the Achaians, who at once
Had gathered round. Without delay he drew 275
The arrow from the fairly-fitted belt.
The barbs were bent in drawing. Then he loosed
The embroidered belt, the quilted vest beneath,
And plate,—the armorer's work,—and carefully
O'erlooked the wound where fell the bitter shaft, 280
Cleansed it from blood, and sprinkled over it
With skill the soothing balsams which of yore
The friendly Chiron to his father gave.

While round the warlike Menelaus thus
The chiefs were busy, all the Trojans moved 285
Into array of battle; they put on
Their armor, and were eager for the fight.
Then wouldst thou not have seen, hadst thou been there,
King Agamemnon slumbering, or in fear,
And skulking from the combat, but alert, 290
Preparing for the glorious tasks of war.
His horses, and his chariot bright with brass,
He left, and bade Eurymedon, his groom,
The son of Ptolemy Piraides,
Hold them apart still panting, yet with charge 295
To keep them near their master, till the hour
When he should need them, weary with the toil
Of such a vast command. Meantime he went
On foot among his files of soldiery,
And whomsoe'er he found with fiery steeds 300
Hasting to battle, thus he cheered them on:—
“O Argives! let not your hot courage cool,
For Father Jove will never take the part
Of treachery. Whosoe'er have been the first
To break the league, upon their lifeless limbs 305
Shall vultures feast; and doubt not we shall bear
Away in our good ships the wives they love
And their young children, when we take their town.”

But whomsoe'er he saw that kept afar
From the dread field, he angrily rebuked:— 310

“O Argives! who with arrows only fight,
Base as ye are, have ye no sense of shame?
Why stand ye stupefied, like fawns, that, tired
With coursing the wide pastures, stop at last,
Their strength exhausted! Thus ye stand amazed, 315
Nor think of combat. Wait ye for the hour
When to your ships, with their fair-sculptured prows,
Moored on the borders of the hoary deep,
The Trojans come, that haply ye may see
If the great hand of Jove will shield you then?” 320

Thus Agamemnon, as supreme in power,
Threaded the warrior-files, until he came
Where stood the Cretans. All in arms they stood
Around Idomeneus, the great in war.
Like a wild boar in strength, he led the van, 325
And, in the rear, Meriones urged on
His phalanxes. The king of men rejoiced,
And blandly thus bespake Idomeneus:—

“Idomeneus! I honor thee above
The other knights of Greece, as well in war 330
As in all other labors, and no less
In banquets, when the Achaian nobles charge

Their goblets with the dark-red mingled wine
In sign of honor. All the other Greeks
Drink by a certain measure, but thy cup 335
Stands ever full, like mine, that thou may'st drink
When thou desirest. Hasten to the war
With all the valor thou dost glory in."

The Cretan chief, Idomeneus, replied:—
"Atrides, I remain thy true ally, 340
As I have pledged my faith. But thou exhort
The other long-haired Greeks, and bid them rush
To combat, since the Trojans break their oath.
For woe and death must be the lot of those
Who broke the peace they vowed so solemnly." 345

He spake. The son of Atreus, glad at heart,
Passed on among the squadrons, till he came
To where the warriors Ajax formed their ranks
For battle, with a cloud of infantry.
As when some goatherd from the hill-top sees 350
A cloud that traverses the deep before
A strong west wind,—beholding it afar,
Pitch-black it seems, and bringing o'er the waves
A whirlwind with it; he is seized with fear,
And drives his flock to shelter in a cave,— 355
So with the warriors Ajax to the war

Moved, dense and dark, the phalanxes of youths
Trained for the combat, and their serried files
Bristling with spears and shields. The king of men
Saw with delight, and spake these wingèd words:— 360

“O warriors Ajax, leaders of the Greeks
In brazen armor, I enjoin you not
To rouse the courage of your soldiery.
Such word would ill become me, for yourselves
Have made your followers eager to engage 365
In manful combat. Would to Jupiter,
To Pallas, and Apollo, that there dwelt
In every bosom such a soul as yours!
Then would the city of King Priam fall
At once, o’erthrown and levelled by our hands.” 370

Thus having said, he left them and went on
To others. There he found the smooth of speech,
Nestor, the Pylian orator, employed
In marshalling his squadrons. Near to him
Alastor and the large-limbed Pelagon, 375
Chromius, and Hæmon, prince among his tribe,
And Bias, shepherd of the people, stood.
The cavalry with steeds and cars he placed
In front. A vast and valiant multitude
Of infantry he stationed in the rear, 380

To be the bulwark of the war. Between
He made the faint of spirit take their place,
That, though unwillingly, they might be forced
To combat with the rest. And first he gave
His orders to the horsemen, bidding them
To keep their coursers reined, nor let them range
At random through the tumult of the crowd:—

385

“And let no man, too vain of horsemanship,
And trusting in his valor, dare advance
Beyond the rest to attack the men of Troy,
Nor let him fall behind the rest, to make
Our ranks the weaker, Whoso from his car
Can reach an enemy's, let him stand and strike
With his long spear, for 't is the shrewder way.
By rules like these, which their brave hearts obeyed,
The men of yore laid level towns and towers.”

390

395

The aged man, long versed in tasks of war,
Counselled them thus. King Agamemnon heard,
Delighted, and in wingèd words he said:—

“O aged man, would that thy knees were firm
As is thy purpose, and thy strength as great!
But age, the common fate of all, has worn
Thy frame: would that some others had thy age,
And thou wert of the number of our youths!”

400

Then answered Nestor, the Gerenian knight:— 405

“O son of Atreus, I myself could wish
That I were now as when of yore I struck
The high-born Ereuthalion down. The gods
Bestow not all their gifts on man at once.
If I were then a youth, old age in turn 410
Is creeping o’er me. Still I keep among
The knights, and counsel and admonish them,—
The office of the aged. Younger men,
They who can trust their strength, must wield the spear.”

He spake. The son of Atreus passed him by, 415
Pleased with his words, and, moving onward, came
Where—with the Athenians, ever prompt to raise
The war-cry, grouped around him—stood the knight
Menestheus, son of Peteus. Near to these
Was wise Ulysses, with his sturdy band 420
Of Cephalonians. None of these had heard
The clamor of the battle, for the hosts
Of Trojan knights and Greeks had just begun
To move, and there they waited for the advance
Of other squadrons marching on to charge 425
The Trojans and begin the war anew.
The king of men, Atrides, was displeased,
And spake, and chid them thus with wingèd words:—

“O son of Peteus, foster-child of Jove,
And thou, the man of craft and evil wiles! 430
Why stand ye here aloof, irresolute,
And wait for others? Ye should be the first
To meet the foe and stem the battle's rage.
I bid you first to banquets which the Greeks
Give to their leaders, where ye feast at will 435
On roasted meats and bowls of pleasant wine.
Now, ere ye move, ye willingly would see
Ten Grecian squadrons join the deadly strife.”

The man of many arts, Ulysses, spake,
And frowned: “O Atreus' son! what words are these 440
Which pass thy lips? How canst thou say that we
Avoid the battle? Ever when the Greeks
Seek bloody conflict with the Trojan knights,
Thou, if thou wilt, and if thou givest heed
To things like these, shalt with thine eyes behold 445
The father of Telemachus engaged
In combat with the foremost knights that form
The Trojan van. Thou utterest empty words.”

King Agamemnon, when he saw the chief
Offended, changed his tone, and, smiling, said:— 450

“Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise
Ulysses! It is not for me to chide

Nor to exhort thee, for thy heart, I know,
 Counsels thee kindly toward me, and thy thought
 Agrees with mine. We will discuss all this 455
 Hereafter. If just now too harsh a word
 Was uttered, may the immortals make it vain!"

So saying, he departed, and went on
 To others. By his steeds and by his car,
 That shone with fastenings of brass, he found 460
 The son of Tydeus, large-souled Diomed,
 And Sthenelus, the son of Capaneus,
 Standing beside him. Looking at them both,
 King Agamemnon to Tydides spake
 In wingèd words, and thus reproved the chief:— 465

"O son of Tydeus, that undaunted knight!
 What is there to appall thee? Why look through
 The spaces that divide the warlike ranks?
 Not thus did Tydeus feel the touch of fear,
 But ever foremost of his warriors fought. 470
 So they declare who saw his deeds, for I
 Was never with him, nor have ever seen
 The hero. Yet they say that he excelled
 All others. Certain is it that he once
 Entered Mycenæ as a friendly guest, 475
 With no array of soldiery, but came

With godlike Polynices. 'T was the time
When warrior-bands were gathered to besiege
The sacred walls of Thebes, and earnestly
They prayed that from Mycenæ they might lead 480
Renowned auxiliars to the war, and we
Would willingly have given the aid they asked, —
For we approved the prayer, — but Jove, with signs
Of angry omen, changed our purposes.
The chiefs departed, journeying on to where 485
Asopus flows through reeds and grass, and thence
The Achæians sent an embassy to Thebes
By Tydeus. There he met the many sons
Of Cadmus at the banquets in the hall
Of valiant Eteocles. Though alone 490
Among so many, and a stranger-guest,
The hero feared them not, but challenged them
To vie with him in games; and easily
He won the victory, such aid was given
By Pallas. Then the sons of Cadmus, skilled 495
In horsemanship, were wroth, and privily
Sent fifty armed youths to lie in wait
For his return. Two leaders had the band, —
Maion, the son of Hæmon, like a god
In form, and Lycophontes, brave in war, 500

Son of Autophonos. A bloody death
Did Tydeus give the youths. He slew them all
Save Maion, whom he suffered to return,
Obedient to an omen from the gods.
Such was Ætolian Tydeus; but his son,
A better speaker, is less brave in war."

505

He spake; and valiant Diomed, who heard
The king's reproof with reverence, answered not.
Then spake the son of honored Capaneus:—

"Atrides, speak not falsely, when thou know'st
The truth so well. Assuredly we claim
To be far braver than our fathers were.
We took seven-gated Thebes with fewer troops
Than theirs, when, trusting in the omens sent
From heaven, and in the aid of Jupiter,
We led our men beneath the city walls
Sacred to Mars. Our fathers perished there
Through their own folly. Therefore never seek
To place them in the same degree with us."

510

515

The brave Tydides with a frown replied:
"Nay, hold thy peace, my friend, and heed my words
Of Agamemnon I will not complain,—
The shepherd of the people; it is his
To exhort the well-armed Greeks to gallant deeds.

520

Great glory will attend him if the Greeks 525
Shall overcome the Trojans, and shall take
The sacred Ilium; but his grief will be
Bitter if we shall fail and be destroyed.
Hence think we only of the furious charge!"

He spake, and from his chariot leaped to earth 530
All armed; the mail upon the monarch's breast
Rang terribly as he marched swiftly on.
The boldest might have heard that sound with fear.

As when the ocean-billows, surge on surge,
Are pushed along to the resounding shore 535
Before the western wind, and first a wave
Uplifts itself, and then against the land
Dashes and roars, and round the headland peaks
Tosses on high and spouts its spray afar,
So moved the serried phalanxes of Greece 540
To battle, rank succeeding rank, each chief
Giving command to his own troops; the rest
Marched noiselessly: you might have thought no voice
Was in the breasts of all that mighty throng,
So silently they all obeyed their chiefs, 545
Their showy armor glittering as they moved
In firm array. But, as the numerous flock
Of some rich man, while the white milk is drawn

Within his sheepfold, hear the plaintive call
Of their own lambs, and bleat incessantly,— 550
Such clamors from the mighty Trojan host
Arose; nor was the war-cry one, nor one
The voice, but words of mingled languages,
For they were called from many different climes.
These Mars encouraged to the fight; but those 555
The blue-eyed Pallas. Terror too was there,
And Fright, and Strife that rages unappeased,—
Sister and comrade of man-slaying Mars,—
Who rises small at first, but grows, and lifts
Her head to heaven and walks upon the earth. 560
She, striding through the crowd and heightening
The mutual rancor, flung into the midst
Contention, source of bale to all alike.

And now, when met the armies in the field,
The ox-hide shields encountered, and the spears, 565
And might of warriors mailed in brass; then clashed
The bossy bucklers, and the battle-din
Was loud; then rose the mingled shouts and groans
Of those who slew and those who fell; the earth
Ran with their blood. As when the winter streams 570
Rush down the mountain-sides, and fill, below,
With their swift waters, poured from gushing springs,

Some hollow vale, the shepherd on the heights
Hears the far roar,—such was the mingled din
That rose from the great armies when they met. 575

Then first Antilochus, advancing, struck
The Trojan champion Echepolus down,
Son of Thalysius, fighting in the van.
He smote him on the helmet's cone, where streamed
The horse-hair plume; the brazen javelin stood 580
Fixed in his forehead, piercing through the bone,
And darkness gathered o'er his eyes. He fell
As falls a tower before some stubborn siege.

Then Elephenor, son of Chalcodon,
Prince of the brave Abrantes, by the foot 585
Seized the slain chieftain, dragging him beyond
The reach of darts, to strip him of his arms;
Yet dropped him soon, for brave Agenor saw,
And, as he stooped to drag the body, hurled
His brazen spear and pierced the uncovered side 590
Seen underneath the shield. At once his limbs
Relaxed their hold, and straight the spirit fled.

Then furious was the struggle of the Greeks
And Trojans o'er the slain; they sprang like wolves
Upon each other, and man slaughtered man. 595

Then by the hand of Ajax Telamon

Fell Simoïsius, in the bloom of youth,
Anthemion's son. His mother once came down
From Ida, with her parents, to their flocks
Beside the Simoïs; there she brought him forth 600
Upon its banks, and gave her boy the name
Of Simoïsius. Unrequited now
Was all the care with which his parents nursed
His early years, and short his term of life,—
Slain by the hand of Ajax, large of soul. 605
For, when he saw him coming, Ajax smote
Near the right pap the Trojan's breast; the blade
Passed through, and out upon the further side.
He fell among the dust of earth, as falls
A poplar growing in the watery soil 610
Of some wide marsh,—a fair, smooth bole, with boughs
Only on high, which with his gleaming axe
Some artisan has felled to bend its trunk
Into the circle of some chariot-wheel;
Withering it lies upon the river's bank. 615
So did the high-born Ajax spoil the corpse
Of Simoïsius, Anthemion's son.
But Antiphus, the son of Priam, clad
In shining armor, saw, and, taking aim,
Cast his sharp spear at Ajax through the crowd. 620

The weapon struck him not, but pierced the groin
Of one who was Ulysses' faithful friend,—
Leucus,—as from the spot he dragged the dead;
He fell, the body dropping from his hold.

Ulysses, stung with fury at his fall, 625

Rushed to the van, arrayed in shining brass,
Drew near the foe, and, casting a quick glance
Around him, hurled his glittering spear. The host
Of Trojans, as it left his hand, shrank back
Upon each other. Not in vain it flew, 630

But struck Democoön, the spurious son
Of Priam, who, to join the war, had left
Abydos, where he tended the swift mares.

Ulysses, to revenge his comrade's death,
Smote him upon the temple with his spear. 635

Through both the temples passed the brazen point,
And darkness gathered o'er his eyes; he fell,
His armor clashing round him with his fall.

Then did the foremost bands, and Hector's self,
Fall back. The Argives shouted, dragging off 640
The slain, and rushing to the ground they won.

Then was Apollo angered, looking down
From Pergamus, and thus he called aloud:—

“Rally, ye Trojans! tamers of fleet steeds!

Yield not the battle to the Greeks. Their limbs 645
Are not of stone or iron, to withstand
The trenchant steel ye wield. Nor does the son
Of fair-haired Thetis now, Achilles, take
Part in the battle, but sits, brooding o'er
The choler that devours him, in his ships." 650

Thus from the city spake the terrible god.
Meantime Tritonian Pallas, glorious child
Of Jupiter, went through the Grecian ranks
Where'er they wavered, and revived their zeal.

Diores, son of Amarynceus, then 655
Met his hard fate. The fragment of a rock
Was thrown by hand at his right leg, and struck
The ankle. Piroüs, son of Imbrasmus,
Who came from Ænus, leading to the war
His Thracian soldiers, flung it; and it crushed 660
Tendons and bones, and down the warrior fell
In dust, and toward his comrades stretched his hands,
And gasped for breath. But he who gave the wound,
Piroüs, came up and pierced him with his spear.
Forth gushed the entrails, and the eyes grew dark: 665

But Piroüs by Ætolian Thoas fell,
Who met him with his spear and pierced his breast
Above the pap. The brazen weapon stood

Fixed in the lungs. Then Thoas came and plucked
The massive spear away, and drew his sword, 670
And thrusting through him the sharp blade, he took
His life away. Yet could he not despoil
The slain man of his armor, for around
His comrades thronged, the Thracians, with their tufts
Of streaming hair, and, wielding their long spears, 675
Drove him away. And he, though huge of limb,
And valiant and renowned, was forced to yield
To numbers pressing on him, and withdrew.
Thus near each other stretched upon the ground
Piroüs, the leader of the Thracian band, 680
And he who led the Epeans, brazen-mailed
Diores, lay with many others slain.

Then could no man, who near at hand beheld
The battle of that day, see cause of blame
In aught, although, unwounded and unbruised 685
By weapons, Pallas led him by the hand
In safety through the midst, and turned aside
The violence of javelins; for that day
Saw many a Trojan slain, and many a Greek,
Stretched side by side upon the bloody field. 690

BOOK V.

THEN Pallas to Tydides Diomed
Gave strength and courage, that he might appear
Among the Achaians greatly eminent,
And win a glorious name. Upon his head
And shield she caused a constant flame to play, 5
Like to the autumnal star that shines in heaven
Most brightly when new-bathed in ocean tides.
Such light she caused to beam upon his crest
And shoulders, as she sent the warrior forth
Into the thick and tumult of the fight. 10

Among the Trojans, Dares was the priest
Of Vulcan, rich and blameless. His two sons
Were Phegeus and Idæus, trained in all
The arts of war. They left the host and came
To meet Tydides,—on the chariot they, 15
And he on foot; and now, as they drew near,
First Phegeus hurled his massive lance. It flew
O'er Diomed's left shoulder and struck not.

Tydides cast his spear, and not in vain ;
It smote the breast of Phegeus in the midst, 20
And dashed him from his seat. Idæus leaped
To earth, and left the sumptuous car, nor dared
To guard the slain, yet would have met his death
If Vulcan had not borne him swiftly thence
Concealed in darkness, that he might not leave 25
The aged man, his father, desolate.
The son of Tydeus took the steeds, and bade
His comrades lead them to the fleet. Aghast
The valiant sons of Troy beheld the sons
Of Dares, one in flight, the other slain. 30

Meantime the blue-eyed Pallas took the hand
Of Mars, and thus addressed the fiery god : —

“Mars, Mars, thou slayer of men, thou steeped in blood,
Destroyer of walled cities! should we not
Leave both the Greeks and Trojans to contend, 35
And Jove to crown with glory whom he will,
While we retire, lest we provoke his wrath?”

Thus having said, she led the violent Mars
From where the battle raged, and made him sit
Beside Scamander, on its grassy bank. 40
And then the Achaians put the sons of Troy
To flight: each leader slew a foe; and first

The king of men, Atrides, from his car
Struck down the huge-limbed Hodus, who was chief
Among the Halizonians. As he turned 45
To flee, the Achaian, smiting him between
The shoulders, drove the javelin through his breast.
Heavily clashed his armor as he fell.

Then by Idomeneus was Phæstus slain,
Son of Meonian Borus, who had come 50
From Tarna, rich in harvests. As he sprang
Into his car, Idomeneus, expert
To wield the ponderous javelin, thrust its blade
Through his right shoulder. From the car he fell,
And the dark night of death came over him. 55
The Achaian warriors following spoiled the slain.

The son of Atreus, Menelaus, slew
With his sharp spear Scamandrius, the son
Of Strophius, practised in the forest chase,
A mighty hunter. Him had Dian taught 60
To strike whatever beast the woody wild
Breeds on the hills; but now availed him not
The favor of Diana, archer-queen,
Nor skill to throw the javelin afar;
For Menelaus, mighty with the spear, 65
Followed him as he fled, and in the back

Smote him, between the shoulder-blades, and drave
The weapon through. He fell upon the ground
Headlong, his armor clashing as he fell.

And then Meriones slew Phereclus, 70
Son of Harmonius, the artificer,
Who knew to shape all works of rare device,
For Pallas loved him. It was he who built
The fleet for Paris,—cause of many woes
To all the Trojans and to him,—for ill 75
He understood the oracles of heaven.

Him did Meriones, pursuing long,
O’ertake, and, smiting him on the right hip,
Pierced through the part beneath the bone and near
The bladder. On his knees with sad lament 80
He fell, and death involved him in its shade.

And then by Meges was Pedæus slain,
Antenor’s base-born son, whose noble wife,
Theano, reared him with as fond a care
As her own children, for her husband’s sake. 85
And now the mighty spearman, Phyleus’ son,
Drew near and smote him with his trenchant lance
Where meet the head and spine, and pierced the neck
Beneath the tongue; and forth the weapon came
Between the teeth. He fell, and in the fall 90
Gnashed with his teeth upon the cold bright blade.

Then did Evæmon's son Eurypylus
Strike down Hypsenor, nobly born, the son
Of great Dolopion, Scamander's priest,
Whom all the people honored as a god. 95

Evæmon's gallant son, o'ertaking him
In flight, with one stroke of his falchion hewed
His brawny arm away. The bloody limb
Dropped to the ground, and the dark night of death
Came o'er his eyes: so cruel fate decreed. 100

Thus toiled the heroes in that stubborn fight.
Nor would you now have known to which array —
Trojan or Greek — Tydides might belong;
For through the field he rushed with furious speed,
Like a swollen river when its current takes 105
The torrent's swiftness, scattering with a sweep
The bridges; nor can massive dikes withstand
Its fury, nor embankments raised to screen
The grassy meadows, while the rains of Jove
Fall heavily, and harvests, late the joy 110
Of toiling youth, are beaten to the ground.

Thus by Tydides the close phalanxes
Of Troy were scattered, nor could they endure,
All numerous as they were, his strong assault.
As Pandarus, Lycaon's eminent son, 115

Beheld Tydides rush athwart the field,
Breaking the ranks, he drew his crooked bow
And smote the chief's left shoulder as he came,
Striking the hollow corselet. The sharp point
Broke through, and blood came gushing o'er the mail. 120
Then called aloud Lycaon's eminent son:—

“Brave Trojans, great in mastery of steeds,
Press on; the bravest of the Grecian host
Is smitten, nor, I think, can long survive
The grievous wound, if it be true that I, 125
At the command of Phœbus, son of Jove,
Have left my home upon the Lycian shore.”

Thus boastfully he spake; but his swift shaft
Slew not Tydides, who had now withdrawn.
And, standing by his steeds and chariot, spake 130
To Sthenelus, the son of Capaneus:—

“Haste down, kind Sthenelus, and with thy hand
Draw the sharp arrow from my shoulder here.”

He spake, and Sthenelus at once leaped down,
Stood by his side, and from his shoulder drew 135
The winged arrow deeply fixed within.

The blood flowed forth upon the twisted rings
Of mail, while Diomed, the valiant, prayed:—

“Hear me, O child of ægis-bearing Jove,

Goddess invincible! if ever thou 140
Didst aid me or my father in the heat
Of battle, aid me, Pallas, yet again.
Give me to slay this Trojan; bring him near,
Within my javelin's reach, who wounded me,
And now proclaims—the boaster—that not long 145
Shall I behold the brightness of the sun.”

So prayed he, and Minerva heard his prayer
And lightened all his limbs,—his feet, his hands,—
And, standing near him, spake these wingèd words:—

“War boldly with the Trojans, Diomed; 150
For even now I breathe into thy frame
The ancestral might and fearless soul that dwelt
In Tydeus, peerless with the steed and shield.
Lo! I remove the darkness from thine eyes,
That thou may'st well discern the gods from men; 155
And if a god should tempt thee to the fight,
Beware to combat with the immortal race;
Only, should Venus, child of Jupiter,
Take part in battle, wound her with thy spear.”

The blue-eyed Pallas spake, and disappeared; 160
And Diomed went back into the field
And mingled with the warriors. If before
His spirit moved him fiercely to engage

The men of Troy, a threefold courage now
Inspired him. As a lion who has leaped 165
Into a fold—and he who guards the flock
Has wounded but not slain him—feels his rage
Waked by the blow;—the affrighted shepherd then
Ventures not near, but hides within the stalls,
And the forsaken sheep are put to flight, 170
And, huddling, slain in heaps, till o'er the fence
The savage bounds into the fields again;—
Such was Tydides midst the sons of Troy.
Astynöus first he slew, Hypenor next,
The shepherd of the people. One he pierced 175
High on the bosom with his brazen spear,
And smote the other on the collar-bone
With his good sword, and hewed from neck and spine
The shoulder. There he left the dead, and rushed
To Abas and to Polyeidus, sons 180
Of old Eurydamas, interpreter
Of visions. Ill the aged man had read
His visions when they joined the war. They died,
And Diomed, the valiant, spoiled the slain.
Xanthus and Thoön he encountered next, 185
The sons of Phænops, born in his old age.
No other child had he, to be his heir,

And he was worn with length of years. These two
Tydides smote and took their lives, and left
Grief to their father and regretful cares, 190
Since he no more should welcome their return
From war, and strangers should divide his wealth.
Then smote he Chromius and Echemon, sons
Of Dardan Priam, in one chariot both.
As on a herd of beeves a lion springs 195
While midst the shrubs they browse, and breaks their
necks,—

Heifer or ox,—so sprang he on the twain
And struck them, vainly struggling, from their car,
And spoiled them of their arms, and took their steeds,
And bade his comrades lead them to the fleet. 200

Æneas, who beheld him scattering thus
The embattled ranks before him, straightway went
Through the thick fight, amid encountering spears,
In search of godlike Pandarus. He found
Lycaon's blameless and illustrious son, 205
And stood before him, and addressed him thus:—

“Where is thy bow, O Pandarus, and where
Thy wingèd arrows? Where the old renown
In which no warrior here can vie with thee,
And none upon the Lycian shore can boast 210

That he excels thee? Hasten, and lift up
Thy hands in prayer to Jupiter, and send
An arrow at this man, whoe'er he be,
Who thus prevails, and thus afflicts our host,
And makes the knees of many a strong man weak. 215
Strike him,—unless he be some god incensed
At Troy for sacrifice withheld, since hard
It is to bear the anger of a god."

Lycaon's son, the far-renowned, replied:—
"Æneas, leader of the Trojans mailed 220
In brass, to me this man in all things seems
Like warlike Diomed. I know his shield,
High helm, and steeds, and yet I may not say
That this is not a god. But if he be
The chief of whom I speak, the warlike son 225
Of Tydeus, not thus madly would he fight,
Without some god to aid him. By his side
Is one of the immortals, with a cloud
About his shoulders, turning from its aim
The swiftly flying arrow. 'T was but late 230
I aimed a shaft that pierced the hollow mail
On his left shoulder, and I thought him sent
To Pluto, but I slew him not. Some god
Must be offended with me. I have here

No steeds or car to mount. Far off at home 235
There stand within Lycaon's palace-walls
Eleven chariots, fair and fresh and new :
Each has an ample cover, and by each
Are horses yoked in pairs, that champ their oats
And their white barley. When I left my home, 240
Lycaon, aged warrior, counselled me,
Within his sumptuous halls, that with my steeds
And chariot I should lead the sons of Troy
In the fierce battle. I obeyed him not :
Far better if I had. I wished to spare 245
My horses, lest, so largely fed at home,
They might want food in the beleaguered town.
So, leaving them, I came on foot to Troy,
Confiding in my bow, which yet was doomed
To avail me little, for already I 250
Have smitten with my arrows the two chiefs,
Tydides and Atrides, and from both
Drew the red blood, but only made their rage
To flame the fiercer. In an evil hour
I took my bow and quiver from the wall 255
And came to lead the Trojans for the sake
Of Hector. But if ever I return
To see my native country and my wife

And my tall spacious mansion, may some foe
Strike off my head if with these hands I fail 260
To break my bow in pieces, casting it
Into the flames, a useless weapon now."

The Trojan chief Æneas, answering, said:—
"Nay, talk not so; it cannot but be thus,
Until upon a chariot, and with steeds, 265
We try our prowess with this man in war.
Haste, mount my chariot here, and thou shalt see
How well are Trojan horses trained to range
The field of battle, in the swift pursuit
Hither and thither, or in rapid flight; 270
And they shall bring us safely to the town
Should Jove a second time bestow the meed
Of glory on Tydides. Haste, and take
The lash and well-wrought reins, while I descend
To fight on foot; or haply thou wilt wait 275
The foe's advance while I direct the steeds."

Then spake again Lycaon's eminent son:—
"Keep thou the reins, Æneas, and still guide
The horses. With their wonted charioteer,
The better shall they bear away the car 280
Should we be forced to fly before the arm
Of Diomed; lest, taking flight, they range

Unmastered when they hear thy voice no more,
Nor bear us from the combat, and the son
Of Tydeus, having slain us, shall lead thence 285
Thy firm-hoofed coursers. Therefore guide them still,
Them and the chariot, while, with this keen spear,
I wait the Greek, as he is rushing on."

They spake, and, climbing the magnificent car,
Turned toward Tydides the swift-footed steeds. 290
The noble son of Capaneus beheld,
And said in wingèd words to Diomed:—

"Tydides Diomed, most dear of men!
I see two warriors, strong, immensely strong,
Coming to combat with thee. Pandarus 295
Is one, the skilled in archery, who boasts
To be Lycaon's son; and by his side
There comes Æneas, glorying that he sprang
From the large-souled Anchises, — borne to him
By Venus. Mount we now our car and leave 300
The ground, nor in thy fury rush along
The van of battle, lest thou lose thy life."

The brave Tydides, with a frown, replied:—
"Speak not of flight; thou canst not yet persuade
My mind to that. To skulk or shrink with fear 305
In battle ill becomes me, and my strength

Is unexhausted yet. It suits me not
To mount the chariot; I will meet the foe
Just as I am. Minerva will not let
My spirit falter. Ne'er shall those swift steeds 310
Bear the two warriors hence,—if even one
Escapes me. One thing more have I to say;
And keep it well in mind. Should Pallas deign—
The wise, forecasting Pallas—to bestow
On me the glory of o'ercoming both, 315
Stop thy swift horses, and tie fast the reins
To our own chariot, and make haste to seize
The horses of Æneas, guiding them
Hence from the Trojan to the Grecian host;
For they are of the stock which Jupiter 320
The Thunderer gave to Tros. It was the price
He paid for Ganymede, and they, of all
Beneath the eye of morning and the sun,
Are of the choicest breed. The king of men,
Anchises, stealthily and unobserved, 325
Brought to the coursers of Laomedon
His brood-mare, and obtained the race. Six colts,
Their offspring, in his courts were foaled. Of these,
Four for himself he kept, and in his stalls
Reared them, and two of them, both apt for war, 330

He gave Æneas. If we make them ours,
The exploit will bring us honor and renown."

Thus they conferred. Meantime their foes drew near,
Urging their fiery coursers on, and first
Lycaon's eminent son addressed the Greek:—

335

"My weapon, swift and sharp, the arrow, failed
To slay thee; let me try the javelin now,
And haply that, at least, may reach its mark."

He spake, and, brandishing his massive spear,
Hurled it against the shield of Diomed.

340

The brazen point broke through, and reached the mail.
Then shouted with loud voice Lycaon's son:—

"Ha! thou art wounded in thy flank; my spear
Bites deep; nor long, I think, canst thou survive,
And great will be my glory gained from thee."

345

But thus the valiant Diomed replied,
Incapable of fear: "Thy thought is wrong.
I am not wounded, and I well perceive
That ye will never give the conflict o'er
Till one of you, laid low amid the dust,
Pour out his blood to glut the god of war."

350

He spake, and cast his spear. Minerva kept
The weapon faithful to its aim. It struck
The nose, and near the eye; then passing on

Betwixt the teeth, the unrelenting edge 355
Cleft at its root the tongue; the point came out
Beneath the chin. The warrior from his car
Fell headlong; his bright armor, fairly wrought,
Clashed round him as he fell; his fiery steeds
Started aside with fright; his breath and strength 360
Were gone at once. Æneas, with his shield
And his long spear, leaped down to guard the slain,
That the Achæians might not drag him thence.
There, lion-like, confiding in his strength,
He stalked around the corpse, and over it 365
Held his round shield and lance, prepared to slay
Whoever came, and shouting terribly.

Tydides raised a stone, — a mighty weight,
Such as no two men living now could lift;
But he, alone, could swing it round with ease. 370
With this he smote Æneas on the hip,
Where the thigh joins its socket. By the blow
He brake the socket and the tendons twain,
And tore the skin with the rough, jagged stone.
The hero fell upon his knees, but stayed 375
His fall with his strong palm upon the ground;
And o'er his eyes a shadow came like night.

Then had the king of men, Æneas, died,

But for Jove's daughter, Venus, who perceived
His danger instantly,—his mother, she 380
Who bore him to Anchises when he kept
His beeves, a herdsman. Round her son she cast
Her white arms, spreading over him in folds
Her shining robe, to be a fence against
The weapons of the foe, lest some Greek knight 385
Should at his bosom aim the steel to take
His life. And thus the goddess bore away
From that fierce conflict her beloved son.

Nor did the son of Capaneus forget
The bidding of the warlike Diomed, 390
But halted his firm-footed steeds apart
From the great tumult, with the long reins stretched
And fastened to the chariot. Next, he sprang
To seize the horses with fair-flowing manes,
That drew the chariot of Æneas. These 395
He drave away, far from the Trojan host,
To the well-greaved Achaians, giving them
In charge, to lead them to the hollow ships,
To his beloved friend Deïpylus,
Whom he of all his comrades honored most, 400
As likest to himself in years and mind.
And then he climbed his car and took the reins,

And, swiftly drawn by his firm-footed steeds,
Followed Tydides, who with cruel steel
Sought Venus, knowing her unapt for war, 405
And all unlike the goddesses who guide
The battles of mankind, as Pallas does,
Or as Bellona, ravager of towns.
O'ertaking her at last, with long pursuit,
Amid the throng of warring men, the son 410
Of warlike Tydeus aimed at her his spear,
And wounded in her hand the delicate one
With its sharp point. It pierced the ambrosial robe,
Wrought for her by the Graces, at the spot
Where the palm joins the wrist, and broke the skin, 415
And drew immortal blood,—the ichor,—such
As from the blessed gods may flow; for they
Eat not the wheaten loaf, nor drink dark wine;
And therefore they are bloodless, and are called
Immortal. At the stroke the goddess shrieked, 420
And dropped her son. Apollo in his arms
Received and in a dark cloud rescued him,
Lest any of the Grecian knights should aim
A weapon at his breast to take his life.
Meantime the brave Tydides cried aloud:— 425
“Leave wars and battle, goddess. Is it not

Enough that thou delude weak womankind?

Yet, if thou ever shouldst return, to bear

A part in battle, thou shalt have good cause

To start with fear, when war is only named." 430

He spake; and she departed, wild with pain,

For grievously she suffered. Instantly

Fleet-footed Iris took her by the hand

And led her from the place, her heart oppressed

With anguish and her fair cheek deathly pale. 435

She found the fiery Mars, who had withdrawn

From that day's combat to the left, and sat,

His spear and his swift coursers hid from sight,

In darkness. At his feet she fell, and prayed

Her brother fervently, that he would lend 440

His steeds that stood in trappings wrought of gold:—

"Dear brother, aid me; let me have thy steeds

To bear me to the Olympian mount, the home

Of gods, for grievously the wound I bear

Afflicts me. 'T was a mortal gave the wound,— 445

Tydides, who would even fight with Jove."

She spake; and Mars resigned to her his steeds

With trappings of bright gold. She climbed the car,

Still grieving, and, beside her, Iris took

Her seat, and caught the reins and plied the lash. 450

On flew the coursers, on, with willing speed,
And soon were at the mansion of the gods
On high Olympus. There the active-limbed,
Fleet Iris stayed them, loosed them from the car,
And fed them with ambrosial food. Meanwhile, 455
The goddess Venus at Dione's feet
Had cast herself. The mother round her child
Threw tenderly her arms, and with her hand
Caressed her brow, and spake, and thus inquired:—

“Which of the dwellers of the skies, dear child, 460
Has dealt thus cruelly with thee, as one
Caught in the doing of some flagrant wrong?”

And thus did Venus, queen of smiles, reply:—
“The son of Tydeus, arrogant Diomed,
Wounded me as I sought to bear away 465
From battle's dangers my beloved son
Æneas, dear beyond all other men:
For now no longer does the battle rage
Between the Greeks and Trojans, but the Greeks
Venture to combat even with the gods.” 470

Dione, great among the goddesses,
Rejoined: “Submit, my daughter, and endure,
Though inly grieved; for many of us who dwell
Upon the Olympian mount have suffered much

From mortals, and have brought great miseries 475
Upon each other. First, it was the fate
Of Mars to suffer, when Aloëus' sons,
Otus and mighty Ephialtes, made
Their fetters fast upon his limbs. He lay
Chained thirteen months within a brazen cell; 480
And haply there the god, whose thirst of blood
Is never cloyed, had perished, but for aid
Which Eribœa gave, the beautiful,
His step-mother. She made his miseries known
To Mercury, who set him free by stealth, 485
Withered and weak with long imprisonment.
And Juno-suffered when Amphytryon's son,
The valiant, dared to plant in her right breast
A three-pronged arrow, and she writhed with pain.
And Pluto suffered, when the hero-son 490
Of ægis-bearing Jove, with a swift shaft,
Smote him beside the portals of the dead,
And left him filled with pain. He took his way
To high Olympus and the home of Jove,
Grieving and racked with pain, for deep the dart 495
Had pierced his brawny shoulder, torturing him.
There Pæan with his pain-dispelling balms
Healed him, for he was not of mortal race.

O daring man and reckless, to make light
Of such impieties, and violate 500
The sacred persons of the Olympian gods!
It was the blue-eyed Pallas who stirred up
Tydides to assail thee thus. The fool!
He knew not that the man who dares to meet
The gods in combat lives not long. No child 505
Shall prattling call him father when he comes
Returning from the dreadful tasks of war.
Let then Tydides, valiant though he be,
Beware lest a more potent foe than thou
Encounter him, and lest the nobly-born 510
Ægialeia, in some night to come—
Wise daughter of Adrastus, and the spouse
Of the horse-tamer Diomed—call up
The servants of her household from their sleep,
Bewailing him to whom in youth she gave 515
Her maiden troth,—the bravest of the Greeks.”
She spake, and wiped the ichor from the hand
Of Venus; at her touch the hand was healed
And the pain left it. Meantime Pallas stood,
With Juno, looking on, both teasing Jove 520
With words of sarcasm. Blue-eyed Pallas thus
Addressed the god: “O Father Jupiter,

Wilt thou be angry at the word I speak?—

As Venus, wheedling some Achaian dame

To join the host she loves, the sons of Troy, 525

Caressed the fair, arrayed in gay attire,

A golden buckle scratched her tender hand."

As thus she spake, the Father of the gods

And mortals, calling golden Venus near,

Said, with a smile: "Nay, daughter, not for thee 530

Are tasks of war; be gentle marriage-rites

Thy care; the labors of the battle-field

Pertain to Pallas and the fiery Mars."

Thus with each other talked the gods, while still

The great in battle, Diomed, pursued 535

Æneas, though he knew that Phœbus stretched

His arm to guard the warrior. Small regard

Had he for the great god, and much he longed

To strike Æneas down and bear away

The glorious arms he wore; and thrice he rushed 540

To slay the Trojan, thrice Apollo smote

Upon his glittering shield. But when he made

The fourth assault, as if he were a god,

The archer of the skies, Apollo, thus

With menacing words rebuked him: "Diomed, 545

Beware; desist, nor think to make thyself

The equal of a god. The deathless race
Of gods is not as those who walk the earth."

He spake; the son of Tydeus, shrinking back,
Gave way before the anger of the god 550
Who sends his shafts afar. Then Phœbus bore
Æneas from the tumult to the height
Of sacred Pergamus, where stands his fane;
And there Latona and the archer-queen,
Diana, in the temple's deep recess, 555
Tended him and brought back his glorious strength.
Meantime the bowyer-god, Apollo, formed
An image of Æneas, armed like him,
Round which the Trojans and Achaians thronged
With many a heavy weapon-stroke that fell 560
Upon the huge orbs of their ox-hide shields
And lighter bucklers. Now to fiery Mars
Apollo spake: "Mars, Mars, thou plague of men,
Thou steeped in blood, destroyer of walled towns!
Wilt thou not force this man to leave the field? 565
Wilt thou not meet in arms this daring son
Of Tydeus, who would even fight with Jove?
Already has he wounded, in close fight,
The goddess Venus at the wrist, and since
Assaulted me as if he were a god." 570

He said, and on the heights of Pergamus
Sat down, while the destroyer Mars went forth
Among the embattled Trojan ranks, to rouse
Their valor. In the form of Acamus,
The gallant Thracian leader, he bespake
The sons of Jove-descended Priam thus:—

575

“O sons of Priam, him who claims descent
From Jupiter! how long will ye submit
To see your people slaughtered by the Greeks?
Is it until the battle-storm shall reach
Your city’s stately portals? Even now
A hero whom we honor equally
With the great Hector, our Æneas, son
Of the large-souled Anchises, is struck down.
Haste, let us rescue our beloved friend.”

580

585

He spake, and into every heart his words
Carried new strength and courage. In that hour
Sarpedon chid the noble Hector thus:—

“Where is the prowess, Hector, which was thine
So lately? Thou hast said that thou alone,
Thy kindred and thy brothers, could defend
The city, without armies or allies.
Now I see none of these; they all, like hounds
Before a lion, crouch and slink away,

590

While the confederates bear the brunt of war. 595
I am but an auxiliar come from far,
From Lycia, where the eddying Xanthus runs.
There left I a beloved wife, and there
An infant child, and large possessions, such
As poor men covet. Yet do I exhort 600
My Lycians to the combat, and myself
Would willingly engage this foe of Troy,
Although I here have nothing which the Greeks
Might bear or drive away. Thou standest still,
Meanwhile, nor dost thou bid the rest to keep 605
Their ground and bear the battle for their wives.
Yet have a care, lest, as if caught at length
In the strong meshes of a mighty net,
Ye find yourselves the captives and the prey
Of enemies, who quickly will destroy 610
Your nobly-peopled city. These are thoughts
That should engage thy mind by night and day,
And thou shouldst beg the chiefs of thine allies,
Called to thy aid from far, that manfully
They meet the foe, and foil his fierce attack, 615
And take the cause of this reproach away."

Sarpedon spake; and Hector, all in arms,
Stung by his words, and leaping from his car,

Brandished his spears, and went among the hosts
And rallied them to battle. Terrible 620
The conflict that ensued. The men of Troy
Made head against the Greeks: the Greeks stood firm,
Nor ever thought of flight. As when the wind
Strews chaff about the sacred threshing-floors
While wheat is winnowed, and before the breeze 625
The yellow Ceres separates the grain
From its light husk, which gathers in white heaps,—
Even so the Greeks were whitened o'er with dust
Raised in that tumult by the horses' hoofs
And rising to the brazen firmament, 630
As toward the fight the charioteers again
Urged on their coursers. Yet the Greeks withstood
The onset, and struck forward with strong arms.
Meantime the furious Mars involved the field
In darkness, to befriend the sons of Troy, 635
And went through all the ranks, and well fulfilled
The mandate which Apollo gave the god
Who wields the golden falchion, bidding him
Kindle the courage of the Trojan host
Whene'er he saw the auxiliar of the Greeks, 640
Minerva, leave the combat. Then the god
Brought from the sanctuary's inner shrine

Æneas,—filling with recovered strength
That shepherd of the people. He beside
His comrades placed himself, and they rejoiced 645
To see him living and unharmed and strong
As ever; yet they questioned not; their task
Was different, set them by the god who bears
The silver bow, and Mars the slayer of men,
And raging Strife that never is appeased. 650

The Ajaces and Ulysses and the son
Of Tydeus roused the Achaïans to the fight.
For of the strength and clamor of the foe
They felt no fear, but calmly stood, to bide
The assault; as stand in air the quiet clouds 655
Which Saturn's son upon the mountain-tops
Piles in still volumes when the north wind sleeps,
And every ruder breath of blustering air
That drives the gathered vapors through the sky.
Thus calmly waited they the Trojan host, 660
Nor thought of flight. And now Atrides passed
In haste along their ranks, and gave command:—

“O friends, be men, and let your hearts be strong,
And let no warrior in the heat of fight
Do what may bring him shame in others' eyes; 665
For more of those who shrink from shame are safe

Than fall in battle, while with those who flee
Is neither glory nor reprieve from death."

So spake the king, and hurled his spear and smote
Deïcoön, the son of Pergasis, 670
A chief, and a companion in the war
Of the great-souled Æneas. He in Troy
Was honored as men honored Priam's sons,
For he was ever foremost in the fight.
The weapon struck his shield, yet stopped not there, 675
But, breaking through its folds and through the belt,
Transfixed the part beneath. The Trojan fell
To earth, his armor clashing with his fall.

Æneas slew the sons of Diocles,—
Orsilochus and Crethon, eminent Greeks. 680
Their father dwelt in Pheræ nobly built,
Amid his riches. From Alpheius he
Derived his race,—a river whose long stream
Flows through the meadows of the Pylian land.
Orsilochus was to Alpheius born, 685
Lord over many men, and he became
The father of great Diocles, to whom
Twin sons were born, well trained in all the arts
Of warfare,— Crethon and Orsilochus.
These, in the prime of youth, with their black ships 690

Followed the Argives to the coast of Troy
Famed for its generous steeds. They left their home
To vindicate the honor of the sons
Of Atreus,—Agamemnon, king of men,
And Menelaus,—but they found their death.

695

As two young lions, nourished by their dam
Amid the thickets of some mighty wood,
Seizing the beeves and fattened sheep, lay waste
The stables, till at length themselves are slain
By trenchant weapons in the shepherd's hand,
So by the weapons of Æneas died

700

These twain; they fell as lofty fir-trees fall.
But now, when Menelaus saw their fate,
The mighty warrior, deeply sorrowing, rushed
Among the foremost, armed in glittering brass,
And brandishing his spear; for Mars had roused
His soul to fury, trusting he would meet
Æneas, and would perish by his hand.

705

Antilochus, the generous Nestor's son,
Came also to the van, for anxiously
He feared mischance might overtake the king,
To make the toils of their long warfare vain;
And there he found the combatants prepared
For battle, with their trusty spears in hand,

710

And standing face to face. At once he took 715
His stand beside the monarch of the Greeks.
At sight of the two warriors side by side,
All valiant as he was, Æneas shunned
The encounter. They, when they had drawn the dead
Among the Grecian ranks, and to their friends 720
Given up the hapless brothers, turned to take
Their place among the foremost in the fight.
Then, too, Pylæmenes, a chief like Mars,
And leader of the Paphlagonian host,—
A valiant squadron armed with shields,—was slain. 725
Atrides Menelaus, skilled to wield
The javelin, gave his death-wound. He transfixed
The shoulder at the collar-bone. Meanwhile
Antilochus against his charioteer,
Mydon, the brave son of Atymnias, hurled 730
A stone that smote his elbow as he wheeled
His firm-paced steeds in flight. He dropped the reins,
Gleaming with ivory as they trailed in dust.
Antilochus leaped forward, smiting him
Upon the temples with his sword. He fell 735
Gasping amidst the sand, his head immersed
Up to his shoulders,—for the sand was deep,—
And there remained till he was beaten down

Before the horses' hoofs. Antilochus,
Lashing the horses, drave them to the Greeks. 740

Hector beheld, and, springing with loud shouts,
Stood mid the wavering ranks. The phalanxes
Of the brave Trojans followed him, for Mars
And terrible Bellona led them on,—
Bellona bringing Tumult in her train, 745
And Mars with brandished lance—a mighty weight—
Now stalking after Hector, now before.

Him when the valiant Diomed beheld,
He trembled; and, as one who, journeying
Along a way he knows not, having crossed 750
A place of drear extent, before him sees
A river rushing swiftly toward the deep,
And all its tossing current white with foam,
And stops and turns, and measures back his way,
So then did Diomed withdraw, and spake:— 755

“O friends, how greatly must we all admire
This noble Hector, mighty with the spear
And terrible in war. There is some god
Forever near him, warding off the stroke
Of death; beside him yonder even now 760
Stands Mars in semblance of a mortal man.
Yield, then, and with your faces toward the foe
Fall back, and strive not with the gods of heaven.”

Even as he spake, the Trojan host drew near,
And Hector slew two warriors trained to arms, — 765
Menesthes and Anchialus, — who came
Both in one chariot to the war. Their fall
Ajax, the son of Telamon, beheld,
And pitied, and drew near, and stood, and hurled
His glittering spear: It smote Ampheius, son 770
Of Selagus, who, rich in lands and goods,
Abode in Pæsus. In an evil hour
He joined the cause of Priam and his sons.
Him at the belt the spear of Ajax smote,
And pierced the bowels. With a crash he fell. 775
Then hastened mighty Ajax to strip off
The armor, but the Trojans at him cast
Their pointed spears that glittered as they flew,
And many struck his shield. He pressed his heel
Against the slain, and from the body drew 780
His brazen spear, but could not from the breast
Loose the bright mail, so thick the weapons came,
And such the wary dread with which he saw
The bravest of the Trojans closing round,
Many and fierce, and all with spears outstretched; 785
And he, though strong and valiant and renowned,
Driven from the ground, gave way to mightier force.

So toiled the warriors through that stubborn fight,
When cruel fate urged on Tlepolemus,
The great and valiant son of Hercules, 790
To meet Sarpedon, mighty as a god.
And now, as each to each advanced,—the son
And grandson of the cloud-compeller Jove,—
Thus first Tlepolemus addressed his foe:—
“Sarpedon, Lycian monarch, what has brought 795
Thee hither, trembling thus, and inexpert
In battle? Lying flatterers are they
That call thee son of Jupiter who bears
The ægis; for unlike the heroes thou,
Born to the Thunderer in times of old, 800
Nor like my daring father, Hercules
The lion-hearted, who once came to Troy
To claim the coursers of Laomedon.
With but six ships, and warriors but a few,
He laid the city waste and made its streets 805
A desolation. Thou art weak of heart,
And round thee are thy people perishing;
Yet, even wert thou brave, thy presence here
From Lycia’s coast would prove of small avail
To Troy; for, slain in combat here by me, 810
Thou to the gates of Hades shalt go down.”

Sarpedon, leader of the Lycians, thus
Made answer: "True it is, Tlepolemus,
That he laid waste the sacred city of Troy
For the base dealings of Laomedon, 815
The monarch who with railing words repaid
His great deservings, and kept back the steeds
For which he came so far. But thou—thy fate
Is slaughter and black death from this my spear;
And fame will come to me, and one more soul 820
Go down to Hades." As Sarpedon spake,
Tlepolemus upraised his ashen spear,
And from the hands of both the chiefs at once
Their massive weapons flew. Sarpedon smote
Full in the throat his foe; the cruel point 825
Passed through the neck, and night came o'er his eyes.
Tlepolemus, in turn, on the left thigh
Had struck Sarpedon with his ponderous lance.
The weapon, cast with vigorous hand and arm,
Pierced deep, and touched the bone; but Jupiter 830
Averted from his son the doom of death.

His noble comrades raised and bore away
The great Sarpedon from the battle-field,
Trailing the long spear with them. Bitter pain
It gave him; in their haste they marked it not, 835

Nor thought to draw the ashen weapon forth,
That he might mount the car; so eagerly
His anxious bearers hurried from the war.

On the other side the well-armed Greeks took up
The slain Tlepolemus, to bear him thence. 840
The great Ulysses, large of soul, beheld,
And felt his spirit moved, as anxiously
He pondered whether to pursue the son
Of Jove the Thunderer, or turn and take
The life of many a Lycian. Yet to slay 845
Jove's mighty son was not his destiny,
And therefore Pallas moved him to engage
The crowd of Lycian warriors. Then he slew
Cœranus and Alastor, Chromius,
Alcander, Halius, and Prytanis 850
Noëmon; and yet more the noble Greek
Had slain, if crested Hector, mighty chief,
Had not perceived the havoc and, arrayed
In shining armor, hurried to the van
Of battle, carrying terror to the hearts 855
Of the Achaïans. As he saw him near,
Sarpedon was rejoiced, yet sadly said:—

“O son of Priam, leave me not a prey
To these Achaïans. Aid me, let me breathe

My latest breath in Troy, since I no more
Can hope, returning to my native land,
To gladden my dear wife and little son.” 860

He spake, and crested Hector answered not,
Still pressing forward, eager to drive back
The Greeks in quick retreat, and take the life 865
Of many a foe. Then did the noble band
Who bore the great Sarpedon lay him down
Beneath a shapely beech, a tree of Jove
The Ægis-bearer. There stout Pelagon,
His well-beloved comrade, from his thigh 870
Drew forth the sharp blade of the ashen spear.
Then the breath left him, and his eyes were closed
In darkness; but the light came back again
As, breathing over him, the fresh north wind
Revived the spirit in his laboring breast. 875

But not for Mars nor Hector mailed in brass
Fled the Achaians to their fleet; nor yet
Advanced they on the foe, but step by step
Gave way before him, for they had perceived
The god of war was with the sons of Troy. 880

Whom first, whom last did Hector, Priam's son,
And iron Mars lay low? The godlike chief
Teuthras, and—great among the Grecian knights—

Orestes, and the Ætolian Trechus, famed
 As spearman, and Œnomaus, and the son 885
 Of Œnops, Helemes, and after these
 Belted Oresbius, who in Hyla made
 His home, intent on gathering wealth beside
 The Lake Cephissus, on whose borders dwelt
 Bœotians many, lords of fertile lands. 890

The white-armed goddess Juno, when she saw
 The Argives falling in that cruel fray,
 Addressed Minerva with these winged words:—

“O thou unconquerable goddess, born
 To Jove the Ægis-bearer! what is this? 895
 It was an idle promise that we made
 To Menelaus, that he should behold
 Troy, with its strong defences, overthrown,
 And reach his home again, if thus we leave
 Mars the destroyer to his ravages. 900
 Come, let us bring our friends effectual aid.”

So spake she, and her bidding was obeyed
 By blue-eyed Pallas. Juno the august,
 Daughter of mighty Saturn, laid in haste
 The harness, with its ornaments of gold, 905
 Upon the horses. Hebe rolled the wheels,
 Each with eight spokes, and joined them to the ends

Of the steel axle,—fellies wrought of gold,
 Bound with a brazen rim to last for aye,—
 A wonder to behold. The hollow naves 910
 Were silver, and on gold and silver cords
 Was slung the chariot's seat; in silver hooks
 Rested the reins, and silver was the pole
 Where the fair yoke and poitreles, all of gold,
 Were fastened. Juno, eager for the strife, 915
 Led the swift-footed steeds beneath the yoke.

Then Pallas, daughter of the god who bears
 The ægis, on her father's palace-floor
 Let fall in dainty folds her flowing robe
 Of many colors, wrought by her own hand, 920
 And, putting on the mail of Jupiter
 The Cloud-compeller, stood arrayed in arms
 For the stern tasks of war. Her shoulder bore
 The dreadful ægis with its shaggy brim
 Bordered with Terror. There was Strife, and there 925
 Was Fortitude, and there was fierce Pursuit,
 And there the Gorgon's head, a ghastly sight,
 Deformed and dreadful, and a sign of woe
 When borne by Jupiter. Upon her head
 She placed a golden helmet with four crests 930
 And fair embossed, of strength that might withstand

The armed battalions of a hundred towns;
Then stepped into her shining car, and took
Her massive spear in hand, heavy and huge,
With which whole ranks of heroes are o'erthrown 535
Before the daughter of the Mighty One
Incensed against them. Juno swung the lash
And swiftly urged the steeds. Before their way,
On sounding hinges, of their own accord,
Flew wide the gates of heaven, which evermore 940
The Hours are watching,—they who keep the mount
Olympus and the mighty heaven, with power
To open or to close their cloudy veil.
Thus through the gates they drave the obedient steeds,
And found Saturnius, where he sat apart 945
From other gods, upon the loftiest height
Of many-peaked Olympus. Juno there,
The white-armed goddess, stayed her chariot-wheels,
And, thus accosting Jove, she questioned him:—
“O Father Jupiter, does not thy wrath 950
Rise at those violent deeds of Mars? Thou seest
How many of the Achaians he has slain,
And what brave men. Nay, thus it should not be.
Great grief is mine; but Venus and the god
Phœbus, who bears the silver bow, rejoice 955

To see this lawless maniac range the field,
And urge him on. O Father Jupiter,
Wilt thou be angry with me if I drive
Mars, sorely wounded, from the battle-field?"

The cloud-compelling Jupiter replied:—

960

"Thou hast my leave; but send to encounter him
Pallas the spoiler, who has many a time
Brought grievous troubles on the god of war."

He spake, and white-armed Juno instantly
Obeyed him. With the scourge she lashed the steeds, 965
And not unwillingly they flew between
Earth and the starry heaven. As much of space
As one who gazes on the dark-blue deep
Sees from the headland summit where he sits—
Such space the coursers of immortal breed
Cleared at each bound they made with sounding hoofs; 970
And when they came to Ilium and its streams,
Where Simoïs and Scamander's channels meet,
The white-armed goddess Juno stayed their speed,
And loosed them from the yoke, and covered them 975
With darkness. Simoïs ministered, meanwhile,
The ambrosial pasturage on which they fed.

On went the goddesses, with step as light
As timid doves, and hastened toward the field

To aid the Achaian army. When they came
 Where fought the bravest warriors in a throng
 Around the great horse-tamer Diomed,
 Like ravenous lions or wild boars whose rage
 Is terrible, the white-armed goddess stood,
 And called aloud,—for now she wore the form
 Of gallant Stentor, in whose brazen voice
 Was heard a shout like that of fifty men:—

“Shame on you, Argives,—wretches, who in form,
 And form alone, are heroes. While we yet
 Had great Achilles in the war, the men
 Of Ilium dared not pass beyond their gates,
 So much they feared his mighty spear; but now
 They push the battle to our hollow ships,
 Far from the town.” As thus the goddess spake,
 New strength and courage woke in every breast.

Then blue-eyed Pallas hastened to the son
 Of Tydeus. By his steeds she found the king,
 And by his chariot, as he cooled the wound
 Made by the shaft of Pandarus. The sweat
 Beneath the ample band of his round shield
 Had weakened him, and weary was his arm.
 He raised the band, and from the wounded limb
 Wiped off the clotted blood. The goddess laid

Her hand upon the chariot-yoke, and said:—

“Tydeus hath left a son unlike himself; 1005
For he, though low in stature, was most brave;
And when he went, an envoy and alone,
To Thebes, the populous Cadmean town,
And I, enjoining him to keep aloof
From wars and rash encounters, bade him sit 1010
Quietly at the feasts in palace-halls,
Still, to his valiant temper true, he gave
Challenges to the Theban youths, and won
The prize with ease in all their games, such aid
I gave him. Now I stand by thee in turn, 1015
Protect thee, and exhort thee manfully
To fight against the Trojans; but to-day
Either the weariness of toil unnerves
Thy frame, or withering fear besets thy heart.
Henceforth we cannot deem thee, as of late, 1020
The offspring of *Ænides* skilled in war.”

And then the valiant *Diomed* replied:—
“I know thee, goddess, daughter of great *Jove*
The *Ægis*-bearer; therefore will I speak
Freely and keep back nothing. No base fear 1025
Unmans me, nor desire of ease; but well
I bear in mind the mandate thou hast given.

Thou didst forbid me to contend with gods,
Except that if Jove's daughter, Venus, joined
The battle, I might wound her with my spear. 1030
But now I have withdrawn, and given command
That all the Greeks come hither; for I see
That Mars is in the field and leads the war."

Again the blue-eyed Pallas, answering, said:—
"Tydides Diomed, most dear of men, 1035
Nay, fear thou nothing from this Mars, nor yet
From any other of the gods; for I
Will be thy sure defence. First urge thy course
Full against Mars, with thy firm-footed steeds.
Engage him hand to hand; respect him not,— 1040
The fiery, frantic Mars, the unnatural plague
Of man, the fickle god, who promised me
And Juno, lately, to take part with us
Against the Trojans and befriend the Greeks.
Now he forgets, and joins the sons of Troy." 1045

She spake, and laid her hand on Sthenelus,
To draw him from the horses; instantly
He leaped to earth; the indignant deity
Took by the side of Diomed her place;
The beechen axle groaned beneath the weight 1050
Of that great goddess and that man of might.

Then Pallas seized the lash and caught the reins,
And, urging the firm-footed coursers, drave
Full against Mars, who at that moment slew
Huge Periphas, the mightiest one of all 1055
The Ætolian band,—Ochesius' famous son.
While bloody-handed Mars was busy yet
About the slain, Minerva hid her face
In Pluto's helmet, that the god might fail
To see her. As that curse of humankind 1060
Beheld the approach of noble Diomed,
He left the corpse of Periphas unspoiled
Where he had fallen, and where he breathed his last,
And came in haste to meet the Grecian knight.
And now, when they were near, and face to face, 1065
Mars o'er the chariot-yoke and horses' reins
First hurled his brazen spear, in hope to take
His enemy's life; but Pallas with her hand
Caught it and turned it, so that it flew by
And gave no wound. The valiant Diomed 1070
Made with his brazen spear the next assault,
And Pallas guided it to strike the waist
Where girded by the baldric. In that part
She wounded Mars, and tore the shining skin,
And drew the weapon back. The furious god 1075

Uttered a cry as of nine thousand men,
Or of ten thousand, rushing to the fight.
The Greeks and Trojans stood aghast with fear,
To hear that terrible cry of him whose thirst
Of bloodshed never is appeased by blood.

1080

As when, in time of heat, the air is filled
With a black shadow from the gathering clouds
And the strong-blowing wind, so furious Mars
Appeared to Diomed, as in a cloud
He rose to the broad heaven and to the home
Of gods on high Olympus. Near to Jove
He took his seat in bitter grief, and showed
The immortal blood still dropping from his wound,
And thus, with wingèd words, complaining said:—

1085

“O Father Jupiter! does not thy wrath
Rise at these violent deeds? ’T is ever thus
That we, the gods, must suffer grievously
From our own rivalry in favoring man;
And yet the blame of all this strife is thine,
For thou hast a mad daughter, ever wrong,
And ever bent on mischief. All the rest
Of the immortals dwelling on this mount
Obey thee and are subject to thy will.
Her only thou hast never yet restrained

1090

1095

By word or act, but dost indulge her freaks 1100
Because the pestilent creature is thy child.
And now she moves the insolent Diomed
To raise his hand against the immortal gods.
And first he wounded Venus in the wrist,
Contending hand to hand; and then he sought 1105
To encounter me in arms, as if he were
The equal of a god. My own swift feet
Carried me thence, else might I long have lain,
In anguish, under heaps of carcasses,
Or helplessly been mangled by his sword." 1110

The Cloud-compeller, Jove, replied, and frowned: —
"Come not to me, thou changeling, to complain.
Of all the gods upon the Olympian mount
I like thee least, who ever dost delight
In broils and wars and battles. Thou art like 1115
Thy mother Juno, headstrong and perverse.
Her I can scarcely rule by strict commands,
And what thou sufferest now, I deem, is due
To her bad counsels. Yet 't is not my will
That thou shouldst suffer longer, who dost share 1120
My lineage, whom thy mother bore to me.
But wert thou born, destroyer as thou art,
To any other god, thou hadst long since
Lain lower than the sons of Uranus."

So spake he, and to Pæon gave command 1125
To heal the wound; and Pæon bathed the part
With pain-dispelling balsams, and it healed;
For Mars was not to die. As, when the juice
Of figs is mingled with white milk and stirred,
The liquid gathers into clots while yet 1130
It whirls with the swift motion, so was healed
The wound of violent Mars. Then Hebe bathed
The god, and robed him richly, and he took
His seat, delighted, by Saturnian Jove.

Now, having forced the curse of nations, Mars, 1135
To pause from slaughter, Argive Juno came,
With Pallas, her invincible ally,
Back to the mansion of imperial Jove.

BOOK VI.

NOW from that stubborn conflict of the Greeks
And Trojans had the gods withdrawn. The fight
Of men encountering men with brazen spears
Still raged from place to place upon the plain
Between the Xanthus and the Simoïs. 5

And first of all did Ajax Telamon,
The bulwark of the Achaïans, break the ranks
Of Troy and raise the hopes of those who fought
Beside him; for he smote the bravest man
Of all the Thracian warriors, — Acamas, 10
Son of Eussorus, strong and large of limb.
His spear-head, through the plumed helmet's cone
Entering the forehead of the Thracian, pierced
The bone, and darkness gathered o'er his eyes.
The valiant Diomed slew Axylus, 15
The son of Teuthras. To the war he came
From nobly-built Arisba; great his wealth,
And greatly was he loved, for courteously

He welcomed to his house beside the way
All comers. None of these could interpose 20
Between him and his death, for Diomed
Slew him and his attendant charioteer,
Calysius; both went down below the earth.

And then Euryalus struck Dresus down,
And smote Opheltius, and went on to slay 25
Æsepus and his brother Pedasus;—

A river-nymph, Abarbareia, bore
Both children to Bucolion the renowned.
Bucolion was the eldest of the sons
Of great Laomedon. His mother reared 30

The boy in secret. While he fed his sheep,
He with the river-nymph was joined in love
And marriage, and she bore him twins; and these,
Brave and of shapely limb, Mecisteus' son
Struck down, and from their shoulders tore the mail. 35

The warlike Polypætēs overthrew
Astyalus; Ulysses smote to earth
Pidytes the Percosian with the spear,
And Teucer Aretaon, nobly born.
The glittering javelin of Antilochus, 40
The son of Nestor, laid Ablerus low;
And Agamemnon, king of men, struck down

Elatus, who on lofty Pegasus
Dwelt, by the smoothly flowing Satnio's stream.
Brave Leïtus slew Phylacus in flight, 45
And by Eurypylus Melanthius fell.
Then valiant Menelaus took alive
Adrastus, whose two coursers, as they scoured
The plain in terror, struck against a branch
Of tamarisk, and, there entangled, snapped 50
The chariot pole, and, breaking from it, fled
Whither were others fleeing. From the car
Adrastus to the dust beside the wheel
Fell, on his face. There, lifting his huge spear,
Atrides Menelaus o'er him stood. 55
Adrastus clasped the warrior's knees and said:—
 "O son of Atreus, take me prisoner,
And thou shalt have large ransom. In the house
Of my rich father ample treasures lie,—
Brass, gold, and tempered steel,—and he shall send 60
Gifts without end when he shall hear that I
Am spared alive and in the Grecian fleet."
He spake, and moved the conqueror, who now
Was minded to give charge that one among
His comrades to the Grecian fleet should lead 65
The captive. Agamemnon came in haste,
And, lifting up his voice, rebuked him thus:—

“O Menelaus, soft of heart, why thus
Art thou concerned for men like these? In sooth,
Great are the benefits thy household owes 70
The Trojans. Nay, let none of them escape
The doom of swift destruction by our hands.
The very babe within his mother’s womb,
Even that must die, and all of Ilium born
Perish unburied, utterly cut off.” 75

He spake; the timely admonition changed
The purpose of his brother, who thrust back
The suppliant hero with his hand; and then
King Agamemnon smote him through the loins,
And prone on earth he fell. Upon the breast 80
Of the slain man Atrides placed his heel,
And from the body drew the ashen spear.

Then Nestor to the Argives called aloud:—
“Friends, Grecian heroes, ministers of Mars!
Let no man here through eagerness for spoil 85
Linger behind the rest, that he may bear
Much plunder to the ships; but let us first
Strike down our enemies, and afterward
At leisure strip the bodies of the dead.”

Thus speaking, he revived in every breast 90
Courage and zeal. Then had the men of Troy

Sought refuge from the Greeks within their walls,
 O'ercome by abject fear, if Helenus,
 The son of Priam, and of highest note
 Among the augurs, had not made his way
 To Hector and Æneas, speaking thus:—

95

“O Hector and Æneas, since on you
 Is laid the mighty labor to command
 The Trojans and the Lycians,—for the first
 Are ye in battle, and in council first,—
 Here make your stand, and haste from side to side,
 Rallying your scattered ranks, lest they betake
 Themselves to flight, and, rushing to their wives,
 Become the scorn and laughter of the foe.
 And then, so soon as ye shall have revived
 The courage of your men, we here will bide
 The conflict with the Greeks, though closely pressed;
 For so we must. But, Hector, thou depart
 To Troy and seek the mother of us both,
 And bid her call the honored Trojan dames
 To where the blue-eyed Pallas has her fane,
 In the high citadel, and with a key
 Open the hallowed doors, and let her bring
 What she shall deem the fairest of the robes,
 And amplest, in her palace, and the one

100

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115

She prizes most, and lay it on the knees
Of the bright-haired Minerva. Let her make
A vow to offer to the goddess there
Twelve yearling heifers that have never borne
The yoke, if she in mercy will regard 120
The city, and the wives and little ones
Of its defenders; if she will protect
Our sacred Ilium from the ruthless son
Of Tydeus, from whose valor armies flee,
And whom I deem the bravest of the Greeks. 125
For not so greatly have we held in dread
Achilles, the great leader, whom they call
The goddess-born; but terrible in wrath
Is Diomed, nor hath his peer in might."

He spake, and Hector of his brother's words 130
Was not unmindful. Instantly he leaped,
Armed, from his chariot, shaking his sharp spears;
And everywhere among the host he went,
Exhorting them to combat manfully;
And thus he kindled the fierce fight anew. 135
They, turning from the flight, withstood the Greeks.
The Greeks fell back and ceased to slay; they thought
That one of the immortals had come down
From out the starry heaven to help the men

Of Troy, so suddenly they turned and fought. 140

Then Hector to the Trojans called aloud:—

“O valiant sons of Troy, and ye allies
Summoned from far! Be men, my friends; call back
Your wonted valor, while I go to Troy
To ask the aged men, our counsellors, 145
And all our wives, to come before the gods
And pray and offer vows of sacrifice.”

So the plumed Hector spake, and then withdrew,
While the black fell that edged his bossy shield
Struck on his neck and ankles as he went. 150

Now came into the midst between the hosts
Glaucus, the offspring of Hippolochus,
And met the son of Tydeus,—both intent
On combat. But when now the twain were near,
And ready to engage, brave Diomed 155
Spake first, and thus addressed his enemy:—

“Who may'st thou be, of mortal men? Most brave
Art thou, yet never in the glorious fight
Have I beheld thee. Thou surpassest now
All others in thy daring, since thou com'st 160
Within the reach of my long spear. The sons
Of most unhappy men are they who meet
My arm; but—if thou comest from above,

A god—I war not with the gods of heaven;
For even brave Lycurgus lived not long, 165
The son of Dryas, who engaged in strife
With the celestial gods. He once pursued
The nurses of the frantic Bacchus through
The hallowed ground of Nyssa. All at once
They flung to earth their sacred implements, 170
Lycurgus the man-slayer beating them
With an ox-driver's goad. Then Bacchus fled
And plunged into the sea, where Thetis hid
The trembler in her bosom, for he shook
With panic at the hero's angry threats. 175
Thenceforward were the blessed deities
Wroth with Lycurgus. Him did Saturn's son
Strike blind, and after that he lived not long,
For he was held in hate by all the gods.
So will I never with the gods contend. 180
But if thou be indeed of mortal race,
And nourished by the fruits of earth, draw near;
And quickly shalt thou pass the gates of death.”
Hippolochus's son, the far-renowned,
Made answer thus: “O large-souled Diomed, 185
Why ask my lineage? Like the race of leaves
Is that of humankind. Upon the ground

The winds strew one year's leaves; the sprouting grove
Puts forth another brood, that shoot and grow
In the spring season. So it is with man : 190
One generation grows while one decays.
Yet since thou takest heed of things like these,
And askest whence I sprang,—although to most
My birth is not unknown,—there is a town
Lapped in the pasture-grounds where graze the steeds 195
Of Argos, Ephyra by name, and there
Dwelt Sisyphus Æolides, most shrewd
Of men; his son was Glaucus, and the son
Of Glaucus was the good Bellerophon,
To whom the gods gave beauty and the grace 200
Of winning manners. Prætus sought his death
And banished him, for Prætus was the chief
Among the Argives; Jupiter had made
That people subject to his rule. The wife
Of Prætus, nobly-born Anteia, sought 205
With passionate desire his secret love,
But failed to entice, with all her blandishments,
The virtuous and discreet Bellerophon.
Therefore went she to Prætus with a lie,—
“ ‘Die, Prætus, thou, or put Bellerophon 210
To death, for he has offered force to me.’

“The monarch hearkened, and was moved to wrath;
And then he would not slay him, for his soul
Revolted at the deed; he sent him thence
To Lycia, with a fatal tablet, sealed, 215
With things of deadly import writ therein,
Meant for Anteia’s father, in whose hand
Bellerophon must place it, and be made
To perish. So at Lycia he arrived
Under the favoring guidance of the gods; 220
And when he came where Lycian Xanthus flows,
The king of that broad realm received his guest
With hospitable welcome, feasting him
Nine days, and offering up in sacrifice
Nine oxen. But when rosy-fingered Morn 225
Appeared for the tenth time, he questioned him
And bade him show the token he had brought
From Prætus. When the monarch had beheld
The fatal tablet from his son-in-law,
The first command he gave him was, to slay 230
Heaven-born Chimæra, the invincible.
No human form was hers: a lion she
In front, a dragon in the hinder parts,
And in the midst a goat, and terribly
Her nostrils breathed a fierce, consuming flame; 235

Yet, trusting in the portents of the gods,
He slew her. Then it was his second task
To combat with the illustrious Solymi,—
The hardest battle he had ever fought—
So he declared—with men; and then he slew— 240
His third exploit—the man-like Amazons.
Then he returned to Lycia; on his way
The monarch laid a treacherous snare. He chose
From his wide Lycian realm the bravest men
To lie in ambush for him. Never one 245
Of these came home again,—Bellerophon
The matchless slew them all. And when the king
Saw that he was the offspring of a god,
He kept him near him, giving him to wife
His daughter, and dividing with him all 250
His kingly honors, while the Lycians set
Their richest fields apart—a goodly spot,
Ploughlands and vineyards—for the prince to till.
And she who now became his wife brought forth
Three children to the sage Bellerophon,— 255
Isandrus and Hippolochus; and, last,
Laodameia, who in secret bore
To all-providing Jupiter a son,—
Godlike Sarpedon, eminent in arms.

But when Bellerophon upon himself 260
Had drawn the anger of the gods, he roamed
The Aleian fields alone, a prey to thoughts
That wasted him, and shunning every haunt
Of humankind. The god whose lust of strife
Is never sated, Mars, cut off his son 265
Isandrus, warring with the illustrious race
Of Solymi; and Dian, she who guides
Her car with golden reins, in anger slew
His daughter. I am of Hippolochus;
From him I claim my birth. He sent me forth 270
To Troy with many counsels and commands,
Ever to bear myself like a brave man,
And labor to excel, and never bring
Dishonor on the stock from which I sprang, —
The bravest stock by far in Ephyra 275
And the wide realm of Lycia. 'T is my boast
To be of such a race and such a blood."

He spake. The warlike Diomed was glad,
And, planting in the foodful earth his spear,
Addressed the people's shepherd blandly thus: — 280

"Most surely thou art my ancestral guest;
For noble Æneus once within his halls
Received the blameless chief Bellerophon,

And kept him twenty days, and they bestowed
Gifts on each other, such as host and guest 285
Exchange; a purple baldric Æneus gave
Of dazzling color, and Bellerophon
A double golden goblet; this I left
Within my palace when I came to Troy.
Of Tydeus I remember nothing, since 290
He left me, yet a little child, and went
To Thebes, where perished such a host of Greeks.
Henceforward I will be thy host and friend
In Argos; thou shalt be the same to me
In Lycia when I visit Lycia's towns; 295
And let us in the tumult of the fray
Avoid each other's spears, for there will be
Of Trojans and of their renowned allies
Enough for me to slay whene'er a god
Shall bring them in my way. In turn for thee 300
Are many Greeks to smite whomever thou
Canst overcome. Let us exchange our arms,
That even these may see that thou and I
Regard each other as ancestral guests."

Thus having said, and leaping from their cars, 305
They clasped each other's hands and pledged their faith.
Then did the son of Saturn take away

The judging mind of Glaucus, when he gave
His arms of gold away for arms of brass
Worn by Tydides Diomed,—the worth 310
Of fivescore oxen for the worth of nine.

And now had Hector reached the Scæan gates
And beechen tree. Around him flocked the wives
And daughters of the Trojans eagerly;
Tidings of sons and brothers they required, 315
And friends and husbands. He admonished all
Duly to importune the gods in prayer,
For woe, he said, was near to many a one.

And then he came to Priam's noble hall,—
A palace built with graceful porticos, 320
And fifty chambers near each other, walled
With polished stone, the rooms of Priam's sons
And of their wives; and opposite to these
Twelve chambers for his daughters, also near
Each other; and, with polished marble walls, 325
The sleeping-rooms of Priam's sons-in-law
And their unblemished consorts. There he met
His gentle mother on her way to seek
Her fairest child, Laodice. She took
His hand and held it fast, while thus she spake:— 330

“Why art thou come, my child, and why hast left

The raging fight? Full hard these hateful Greeks
Press us, in fighting round the city-walls.
Thy heart, I know, hath moved thee to repair
To our high citadel, and lift thy hands 335
In prayer to Jupiter. But stay thou here
Till I bring pleasant wine, that thou may'st pour
A part to Jove and to the other gods,
And drink and be refreshed; for wine restores
Strength to the weary, and I know that thou 340
Art weary, fighting for thy countrymen."

Great Hector of the crested helm replied:—
"My honored mother, bring not pleasant wine,
Lest that unman me, and my wonted might
And valor leave me. I should fear to pour 345
Dark wine to Jupiter with hands unwashed.
Nor is it fitting that a man like me,
Defiled with blood and battle-dust, should make
Vows to the cloud-compeller, Saturn's son.
But thou, with incense, seek the temple reared 350
To Pallas the despoiler,—calling first
Our honored dames together. Take with thee
What thou shalt deem the fairest of the robes,
And amplest, in thy palace, and the one
Thou prizest most, and lay it on the knees 355

Of the bright-haired Minerva. Make a vow
To offer to the goddess in her fane
Twelve yearling heifers that have never borne
The yoke, if she in mercy will regard
The city, and the wives and little ones 360
Of its defenders; if she will protect
Our sacred Ilium from the ruthless son
Of Tydeus, from whose valor armies flee.
So to the shrine of Pallas, warrior-queen,
Do thou repair, while I depart to seek 365
Paris, if he will listen to my voice.
Would that the earth might open where he stands,
And swallow him! Olympian Jupiter
Reared him to be the bane of all who dwell
In Troy, to large-souled Priam and his sons. 370
Could I behold him sinking to the shades,
My heart would lose its sense of bitter woe."

He spake. His mother, turning homeward, gave
Charge to her handmaids, who through all the town
Passed, summoning the matrons, while the queen 375
Descended to her chamber, where the air
Was sweet with perfumes, and in which were laid
Her rich embroidered robes, the handiwork
Of Sidon's damsels, whom her son had brought—

The godlike Alexander—from the coast 380
Of Sidon, when across the mighty deep
He sailed and brought the high-born Helen thence.
One robe, most beautiful of all, she chose,
To bring to Pallas, ampler than the rest,
And many-hued; it glistened like a star, 385
And lay beneath them all. Then hastily
She left the chamber with the matron train.

They reached Minerva's temple, and its gates
Were opened by Theano, rosy-cheeked,
The knight Antenor's wife and Cisseus' child, 390
Made priestess to the goddess by the sons
Of Troy. Then all the matrons lifted up
Their voices and stretched forth their suppliant hands
To Pallas, while the fair Theano took
The robe and spread its folds upon the lap 395
Of fair-haired Pallas, and with solemn vows
Prayed to the daughter of imperial Jove:—

“O venerated Pallas, Guardian-Power
Of Troy, great goddess! shatter thou the lance
Of Diomed, and let him fall in death 400
Before the Scæan gates, that we forthwith
May offer to thee in thy temple here
Twelve yearling heifers that have never worn

The yoke, if thou wilt pity us and spare
The wives of Trojans and their little ones."

405

So spake she, supplicating; but her prayer
Minerva answered not; and while they made
Vows to the daughter of Almighty Jove,
Hector was hastening to the sumptuous home
Of Alexander, which that prince had built
With aid of the most cunning architects
In Troy the fruitful, by whose hands were made
The bed-chamber and hall and ante-room.

410

There entered Hector, dear to Jove; he bore
In hand a spear eleven cubits long:
The brazen spear-head glittered brightly, bound
With a gold circle. In his room he there
Found Paris, busied with his shining arms,—
Corselet and shield; he tried his curvèd bow;
While Argive Helen with the attendant maids
Was sitting, and appointed each a task.

415

420

Hector beheld, and chid him sharply thus:—

"Strange man! a fitting time indeed is this,
To indulge thy sullen humor, while in fight
Around our lofty walls the men of Troy
Are perishing, and for thy sake the war
Is fiercely blazing all around our town.

425

Thou wouldst thyself reprove him, shouldst thou see
Another warrior as remiss as thou
In time of battle. Rouse thee, then, and act, 430
Lest we behold our city all in flames."

Then answered Paris of the godlike form:—
"Hector! although thou justly chidest me,
And not beyond my due, yet let me speak.
Attend and hearken. Not in sullenness, 435
Nor angry with the Trojans, sat I here
Within my chamber, but that I might give
A loose to sorrow. Even now my wife
With gentle speeches has besought of me
That I return to battle; and to me 440
That seems the best, for oft doth victory
Change sides in war. Remain thou yet awhile,
Till I put on my armor; or go thou,
And I shall follow and rejoin thee soon."

He ended. Hector of the beamy helm 445
Heard him, and answered not; but Helen spake,
And thus with soothing words addressed the chief:—

"Brother-in-law,—for such thou art, though I
Am lost to shame, and cause of many ills,—
Would that some violent blast when I was born 450
Had whirled me to the mountain wilds, or waves

Of the hoarse sea, that they might swallow me,
Ere deeds like these were done! But since the gods
Have thus decreed, why was I not the wife
Of one who bears a braver heart and feels 455
Keenly the anger and reproach of men?
For Paris hath not, and will never have,
A resolute mind, and must abide the effect
Of his own folly. Enter thou meanwhile,
My brother; seat thee here, for heavily 460
Must press on thee the labors thou dost bear
For one so vile as I, and for the sake
Of guilty Paris. An unhappy lot,
By Jupiter's appointment, waits us both,—
A theme of song for men in time to come.” 465

Great Hector of the beamy helm replied:—
“Nay, Helen, ask me not to sit; thy speech
Is courteous, but persuades me not. My mind
Is troubled for the Trojans, to whose aid
I hasten, for they miss me even now. 470
But thou exhort this man, and bid him haste
To overtake me ere I leave the town.
I go to my own mansion first, to meet
My household,—my dear wife and little child;
Nor know I whether I may come once more 475

To them, or whether the great gods ordain
That I must perish by the hands of Greeks."

So spake the plumèd Hector, and withdrew,
And reached his pleasant palace, but found not
White-armed Andromache within, for she 480
Was in the tower, beside her little son
And well-robed nurse, and sorrowed, shedding tears.
And Hector, seeing that his blameless wife
Was not within, came forth again, and stood
Upon the threshold questioning the maids. 485

"I pray you, damsels, tell me whither went
White-armed Andromache? Has she gone forth
To seek my sisters, or those stately dames,
My brothers' wives? Or haply has she sought
The temple of Minerva, where are met 490
The other bright-haired matrons of the town
To supplicate the dreaded deity?"

Then said the diligent housewife in reply:—
"Since thou wilt have the truth,—thy wife is gone
Not to thy sisters, nor those stately dames, 495
Thy brothers' wives; nor went she forth to join
The other bright-haired matrons of the town,
Where in Minerva's temple they are met
To supplicate the dreaded deity.

But to the lofty tower of Troy she went 500
When it was told her that the Trojan troops
Lost heart, and that the valor of the Greeks
Prevailed. She now is hurrying toward the walls,
Like one distracted, with her son and nurse."

So spake the matron. Hector left in haste 505
The mansion, and retraced his way between
The rows of stately dwellings, traversing
The mighty city. When at length he reached
The Scæan gates, that issue on the field,
His spouse, the nobly-dowered Andromache, 510
Came forth to meet him,—daughter of the prince
Eëtion, who, among the woody slopes
Of Placos, in the Hypoplacian town
Of Thebé, ruled Cilicia and her sons,
And gave his child to Hector great in arms. 515
She came attended by a maid, who bore
A tender child—a babe too young to speak—
Upon her bosom,—Hector's only son,
Beautiful as a star, whom Hector called
Scamandrius, but all else Astyanax,— 520
The city's lord,—since Hector stood the sole
Defence of Troy. The father on his child
Looked with a silent smile. Andromache

Pressed to his side meanwhile, and, all in tears,
Clung to his hand, and, thus beginning, said : — 525

“Too brave! thy valor yet will cause thy death.
Thou hast no pity on thy tender child,
Nor me, unhappy one, who soon must be
Thy widow. All the Greeks will rush on thee
To take thy life. A happier lot were mine, 530
If I must lose thee, to go down to earth,
For I shall have no hope when thou art gone, —
Nothing but sorrow. Father have I none,
And no dear mother. Great Achilles slew
My father when he sacked the populous town 535
Of the Cilicians, — Thebé with high gates.
’Twas there he smote Eëtion, yet forbore
To make his arms a spoil; he dared not that,
But burned the dead with his bright armor on,
And raised a mound above him. Mountain-nymphs, 540
Daughters of ægis-bearing Jupiter,
Came to the spot and planted it with elms.
Seven brothers had I in my father’s house,
And all went down to Hades in one day.
Achilles the swift-footed slew them all 545
Among their slow-paced bullocks and white sheep.
My mother, princess on the woody slopes

Of Placos, with his spoils he bore away,
And only for large ransom gave her back.
But her Diana, archer-queen, struck down 550
Within her father's palace. Hector, thou
Art father and dear mother now to me,
And brother and my youthful spouse besides.
In pity keep within the fortress here,
Nor make thy child an orphan nor thy wife 555
A widow. Post thine army near the place
Of the wild fig-tree, where the city-walls
Are low and may be scaled. Thrice in the war
The boldest of the foe have tried the spot,—
The Ajaces and the famed Idomeneus, 560
The two chiefs born to Atreus, and the brave
Tydides, whether counselled by some seer
Or prompted to the attempt by their own minds.”
Then answered Hector, great in war: “All this
I bear in mind, dear wife; but I should stand 565
Ashamed before the men and long-robed dames
Of Troy, were I to keep aloof and shun
The conflict, coward-like. Not thus my heart
Prompts me, for greatly have I learned to dare
And strike among the foremost sons of Troy, 570
Upholding my great father's fame and mine;

Yet well in my undoubting mind I know
The day shall come in which our sacred Troy,
And Priam, and the people over whom
Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all. 575
But not the sorrows of the Trojan race,
Nor those of Hecuba herself, nor those
Of royal Priam, nor the woes that wait
My brothers many and brave,—who all at last,
Slain by the pitiless foe, shall lie in dust,— 580
Grieve me so much as thine, when some mailed Greek
Shall lead thee weeping hence, and take from thee
Thy day of freedom. Thou in Argos then
Shalt, at another's bidding, ply the loom,
And from the fountain of Messeis draw 585
Water, or from the Hypereian spring,
Constrained unwilling by thy cruel lot.
And then shall some one say who sees thee weep,
'This was the wife of Hector, most renowned
Of the horse-taming Trojans, when they fought 590
Around their city.' So shall some one say,
And thou shalt grieve the more, lamenting him
Who haply might have kept afar the day
Of thy captivity. O, let the earth
Be heaped above my head in death before 595
I hear thy cries as thou art borne away!"

So speaking, mighty Hector stretched his arms
To take the boy; the boy shrank crying back
To his fair nurse's bosom, scared to see
His father helmeted in glittering brass, 600
And eying with affright the horse-hair plume
That grimly nodded from the lofty crest.
At this both parents in their fondness laughed;
And hastily the mighty Hector took
The helmet from his brow and laid it down 605
Gleaming upon the ground, and, having kissed
His darling son and tossed him up in play,
Prayed thus to Jove and all the gods of heaven:—
“O Jupiter and all ye deities,
Vouchsafe that this my son may yet become 610
Among the Trojans eminent like me,
And nobly rule in Ilium. May they say,
‘This man is greater than his father was!’
When they behold him from the battle-field
Bring back the bloody spoil of the slain foe,— 615
That so his mother may be glad at heart.”
So speaking, to the arms of his dear spouse
He gave the boy; she on her fragrant breast
Received him, weeping as she smiled. The chief
Beheld, and, moved with tender pity, smoothed 620
Her forehead gently with his hand and said:—

“Sorrow not thus, beloved one, for me.
No living man can send me to the shades
Before my time; no man of woman born,
Coward or brave, can shun his destiny.
But go thou home, and tend thy labors there,—
The web, the distaff,—and command thy maids
To speed the work. The cares of war pertain
To all men born in Troy, and most to me.”

625

Thus speaking, mighty Hector took again
His helmet, shadowed with the horse-hair plume,
While homeward his beloved consort went,
Oft looking back, and shedding many tears.
Soon was she in the spacious palace-halls
Of the man-queller Hector. There she found
A troop of maidens,—with them all she shared
Her grief; and all in his own house bewailed
The living Hector, whom they thought no more
To see returning from the battle-field,
Safe from the rage and weapons of the Greeks.

630

635

640

Nor waited Paris in his lofty halls,
But when he had put on his glorious arms,
Glittering with brass, he traversed with quick steps
The city; and as when some courser, fed
With barley in the stall, and wont to bathe

645

In some smooth-flowing river, having snapped
His halter, gayly scampers o'er the plain,
And in the pride of beauty bears aloft
His head, and gives his tossing mane to stream
Upon his shoulders, while his flying feet
Bear him to where the mares are wont to graze,—
So came the son of Priam—Paris—down
From lofty Pergamus in glittering arms,
And, glorious as the sun, held on his way
Exulting and with rapid feet. He found
His noble brother Hector as he turned
To leave the place in which his wife and he
Had talked together. Alexander then—
Of godlike form—addressed his brother thus:—

650

655

“My elder brother! I have kept thee here
Waiting, I fear, for me, though much in haste,
And came less quickly than thou didst desire.”

660

And Hector of the plumèd helm replied:—
“Strange being, no man justly can dispraise
Thy martial deeds, for thou art truly brave.
But oft art thou remiss and wilt not join
The combat. I am sad at heart to hear
The Trojans—they who suffer for thy sake
A thousand hardships—speak so ill of thee.

665

Yet let us go: we will confer of this 670
Another time, if Jove should e'er vouchsafe
That to the immortal gods of heaven we pour
In our own halls the cup of liberty
When we have chased the well-armed Greeks from
Troy."

BOOK VII.

THE illustrious Hector spake, and rapidly
Passed through the gate, and with him issued forth
His brother Alexander, — eager, both,
For war and combat. As when God bestows,
To glad the long-expecting mariners, 5
A favorable wind while wearily
They beat the ocean with their polished oars,
Their arms all nerveless with their length of toil, —
Such to the expecting Trojans was the sight
Of the two chiefs. First Alexander slew 10
Menesthus, who in Arnè had his home,
A son of Areïthoüs the king.
Large-eyed Philomedusa brought him forth
To the mace-bearer Areïthoüs.
And Hector smote Eïoneus, the spear 15
Piercing his neck beneath the brazen casque,
And straightway he dropped lifeless. Glaucus then —
Son of Hippolochus, and chief among

The Lycians—in that fiery onset slew
Iphinoüs, son of Dexius, with his spear. 20
It pierced the warrior's shoulder as he sprang
To mount his rapid car, and from the place
He fell to earth, his limbs relaxed in death.
Now when Minerva of the azure eyes
Beheld them in the furious combat thus 25
Wasting the Grecian host, she left the peaks
Of high Olympus, and came down in haste
To sacred Ilium. Straight Apollo flew
To meet her, for he marked from Pergamus
Her coming, and he greatly longed to give 30
The victory to the Trojans. As they met
Beside the beechen tree, the son of Jove,
The king Apollo, spake to Pallas thus:—
“Why hast thou, daughter of imperial Jove,
Thus left Olympus in thine eager haste? 35
Seek'st thou to turn in favor of the Greeks
War's wavering chances?—for I know too well
Thou hast no pity when the men of Troy
Are perishing. But, if thou wilt give ear
To me, I shall propose a better way. 40
Cause we the conflict for this day to cease,
And be it afterward renewed until

An end be made of Troy, since it hath pleased
You, goddesses, to lay the city waste."

And blue-eyed Pallas answered: "Be it so, 45
O mighty Archer. With a like intent
I left Olympus for this battle-field
Of Greeks and Trojans. But by what device
Think'st thou to bring the combat to a pause?"

Then spake the king Apollo, son of Jove, 50
In turn to Pallas: "Let us seek to rouse
The fiery spirit of the Trojan knight
Hector, that he may challenge in the field
Some Greek to meet him, singly and alone,
In mortal combat. Then the well-armed Greeks, 55
Stung by the bold defiance, will send forth
A champion against Priam's noble son."

He spake. The blue-eyed goddess gave assent;
And straightway Helenus, beloved son
Of Priam, in his secret mind perceived 60
The purpose of the gods consulting thus,
And came and stood by Hector's side and said:—

"O Hector, son of Priam, and like Jove
In council, wilt thou hearken to my words
Who am thy brother? Cause the Trojans all 65
And all the Greeks to sit, while thou shalt stand

Proclaiming challenge to the bravest man
Among the Achaians to contend with thee
In mortal combat. It is not thy fate
To fall and perish yet, for thus have said 70
The ever-living gods, whose voice I heard."

He spake; and Hector, hearing him, rejoiced,
And went between the hosts. He bore his spear,
Holding it in the middle, and pressed back
The ranks of Trojans, and they all sat down. 75
And Agamemnon caused the well-armed Greeks
To sit down also. Meantime Pallas sat,
With Phœbus of the silver bow, in shape
Like vultures, on the boughs of the tall beech,—
The tree of Father Jupiter who bears 80
The ægis,—and they looked with great delight
Upon the array of warriors in thick rows,
Horrid with shields and helms and bristling spears.
As when the west wind, rising fresh, breathes o'er
The deep, and darkens all its face with waves, 85
So seemed the Greeks and Trojans as they sat
In ranks upon the field, while Hector stood
Between the armies and bespake them thus:—

"Ye Trojans, and ye well-armed Greeks, give ear
To what my spirit bids me speak. The son 90

Of Saturn, throned on high, hath not vouchsafed
To ratify the treaty we have made,
But meditates new miseries for us both,
Till ye possess the towery city of Troy,
Or, vanquished, yield yourselves beside the barks 95
That brought you o'er the sea. With you are found
The bravest sons of Greece. If one of these
Is moved to encounter me, let him stand forth
And fight with noble Hector. I propose,
And call on Jove to witness, that if he 100
Shall slay me with the long blade of his spear,
My arms are his to spoil and to bestow
Among the hollow ships; but he must send
My body home, that there the sons of Troy
And Trojan dames may burn it on the pyre. 105
But if I take his life, and Phœbus crown
My combat with that glory, I will strip
His armor off and carry it away
To hallowed Ilium, there to hang it high
Within the temple of the archer-god 110
Apollo; but his body I will send
Back to the well-oared ships, that on the beach
The long-haired Greeks may hold his funeral rites,
And rear his tomb by the wide Hellespont.

And then, in time to come, shall some one say, 115
Sailing in his good ship the dark-blue deep,
'This is the sepulchre of one who died
Long since, and whom, though fighting gallantly,
Illustrious Hector slew.' So shall he say
Hereafter, and my fame shall never die." 120

He spake; but utter silence held them all,—
Ashamed to shun the encounter, yet afraid
To meet it,—till at length, with heavy heart,
Rose Menelaus from his seat, and thus
Bespake the army with reproachful words:— 125

"O boastful ones, no longer to be called
Greek warriors, but Greek women! a disgrace
Grievous beyond all others will be ours,
If none be found in all the Achaian host
To meet this Hector. May you, every one, 130
There where ye now are sitting, turn to earth
And water, craven as ye are, and lost
To sense of glory! I will arm myself
For this encounter. With the immortal gods
Alone it rests to give the victory." 135

He spake, and put his glorious armor on.
Then, Menelaus, had the Trojan's hand
Ended thy life, for he was mightier far

Than thou, had not the Achaian kings at once
Uprisen to hold thee back, while Atreus' son, 140
Wide-ruling Agamemnon, took thy hand
In his, and made thee listen while he spake:—

“Sure, noble Menelaus, thou art mad.
Such frenzied daring suits not with the time.
Restrain thyself, though thou hast cause for wrath; 145
Nor in thy pride of courage meet in arms
One so much mightier,—Hector, Priam's son,
Whom every other chief regards with fear,
Whom even Achilles, braver far than thou,
Dreads to encounter in the glorious fight. 150
Withdraw, then, to thy comrades, and sit down.
The Greeks will send some other champion forth
Against him; and though fearless, and athirst
For combat, he, I deem, will gladly bend
His weary knees to rest should he escape 155
From that fierce conflict in the lists alive.”

With words like these the Grecian hero changed
The purpose of his brother, who obeyed
The prudent counsel; and with great delight
The attendants stripped the armor from his breast. 160
Then Nestor rose amid the Greeks and said:—

“Ye gods! a great calamity hath fallen

Upon Achaia. How the aged chief
Peleus, the illustrious counsellor and sage,
Who rules the Myrmidons, will now lament!— 165
He who once gladly in his palace-home
Inquired of me the race and pedigree
Of the Greek warriors. Were he but to know
That all of them are basely cowering now
In Hector's presence, how would he uplift 170
His hands and pray the gods that from his limbs
The parted soul might pass to the abode
Of Pluto! Would to Father Jupiter
And Pallas and Apollo that again
I were as young as when the Pylian host 175
And the Arcadians, mighty with the spear,
Fought on the banks of rapid Celadon
And near to Phæa and Iardan's streams.
There godlike Ereuthalion stood among
Our foremost foes, and on his shoulders bore 180
The armor of King Areïthoüs, —
The noble Areïthoüs, whom men
And graceful women called the Mace-bearer;
For not with bow he fought, nor ponderous lance,
But broke the phalanxes with iron mace. 185
Lycurgus slew him, but by stratagem,

And not by strength; he from a narrow way,
Where was no room to wield the iron mace,
Through Arcithoüs thrust the spear: he fell
Backward; the victor took his arms, which Mars 190
The war-god gave, and which in after-time
Lycurgus wore on many a battle-field.
And when within his palace he grew old,
He gave them to be worn by one he loved,—
To Ereuthalion, who attended him 195
In battle, and who, wearing them, defied
The bravest of our host. All trembled; all
Held back in fear, nor dared encounter him.
But me a daring trust in my own strength
Impelled to meet him. I was youngest then 200
Of all the chiefs; I fought, and Pallas gave
The victory over him, and thus I slew
The hugest and most strong of men; he lay
Extended in vast bulk upon the ground.
Would I were young as then, my frame unworn 205
By years! and Hector of the beamy helm
Should meet an adversary soon; but now
No one of all the chieftains here, renowned
To be the bravest of the Achaian race,
Hastens to meet in arms the Trojan chief.” 210

Thus with upbraiding words the old man spake;
And straight arose nine warriors from their seats.
The first was Agamemnon, king of men;
The second, brave Tydides Diomed;
And then the chieftains Ajax, bold and strong; 215
And then Idomeneus, with whom arose
Meriones, his armor-bearer, great
As Mars himself in battle. After them,
Eurypylus, Evæmon's valiant son,
And Thoas, offspring of Andræmon, rose, 220
And the divine Ulysses,—claiming all
To encounter noble Hector in the lists.
But then spake Nestor the Gerenian knight:—

“Now let us cast the lot for all, and see
To whom it falls; for greatly will he aid 225
The nobly-armed Achæians, and as great
Will be his share of honor should he come
Alive from the hard trial of the fight.”

Then each one marked his lot, and all were cast
Into the helm of Agamemnon, son 230
Of Atreus. All the people lifted up
Their hands in prayer to the ever-living gods,
And turned their eyes to the broad heaven, and said:—

“Grant, Father Jove, that Ajax, or the son

Of Tydeus, or the monarch who bears rule 235
In rich Mycenæ may obtain the lot."

Such was their prayer, while the Gerenian knight,
Old Nestor, shook the lots; and from the helm
Leaped forth the lot of Ajax, as they wished.
A herald took it, and from right to left 240
Bore it through all the assembly, showing it
To all the leaders of the Greeks. No one
Knew it, and all disclaimed it. When at last,
Carried through all the multitude, it came
To Ajax the renowned, who had inscribed 245
And laid it in the helmet, he stretched forth
His hand, while at his side the herald stood,
And took and looked upon it, knew his sign,
And gloried as he looked, and cast it down
Upon the ground before his feet, and said:— 250

"O friends! the lot is mine, and I rejoice
Heartily, for I think to overcome
The noble Hector. Now, while I put on
My armor for the fight, pray ye to Jove,
The mighty son of Saturn, silently, 255
Unheard by them of Troy, or else aloud,
Since we fear no one. None by strength of arm
Shall vanquish me, or find me inexpert

In battle, nor was I to that degree
Ill-trained in Salamis, where I was born.” 260

He spake; and they to Saturn’s monarch-son
Prayed, looking up to the broad heaven, and said:—

“O Father Jove! most mighty, most august!
Who rulest from the Idæan mount, vouchsafe
That Ajax bear away the victory 265
And everlasting honor; but if thou
Dost cherish Hector and protect his life,
Give equal strength to both, and equal fame.”

Such were their words, while Ajax armed himself
In glittering brass; and, when about his limbs 270
The mail was buckled, forward rushed the chief.
As moves the mighty Mars to war among
The heroes whom the son of Saturn sends
To struggle on the field in murderous strife,
So the great Ajax, bulwark of the Greeks, 275
With a grim smile came forward, and with strides
Firm-set and long, and shook his ponderous spear.
The Greeks exulted at the sight; dismay
Seized every Trojan: even Hector’s heart
Quailed in his bosom; yet he might not now 280
Withdraw through fear, nor seek to hide among
The throng of people, since himself had given

The challenge. Ajax, drawing near, upheld
 A buckler like a rampart, bright with brass,
 And strong with ox-hides seven. The cunning hand 285
 Of Tychius, skilled beyond all other men
 In leather-work, had wrought it at his home
 In Hyla. He for Ajax framed the shield
 With hides of pampered bullocks in seven folds,
 And an eighth fold of brass, — the outside fold. 290

This Telamonian Ajax held before
 His breast, as he approached, and threatening said: —
 “Now shalt thou, Hector, singly matched with me,
 Learn by what chiefs the Achaian host is led
 Besides Achilles, mighty though he be 295
 To break through squadrons, and of lion-heart.
 Still in the beakèd ships in which he crossed
 The sea he cherishes his wrath against
 The shepherd of the people, — Atreus’ son.
 But we have those that dare defy thee yet, 300
 And they are many. Let the fight begin.”

Then answered Hector of the plumèd helm: —
 “O high-born Ajax, son of Telamon,
 And prince among thy people, think thou not
 To treat me like a stripling weak of arm, 305
 Or woman all untrained to tasks of war.

I know what battles are and bloody frays,
And how to shift to right and left the shield
Of seasoned hide, and, unfatigued, maintain
The combat; how on foot to charge the foe 310
With steps that move to martial airs, and how
To leap into the chariot and pursue
The war with rushing steeds. Yet not by stealth
Seek I to smite thee, valiant as thou art,
But in fair open battle, if I may." 315

He spake, and, brandishing his ponderous lance,
Hurled it; and on the outer plate of brass,
Which covered the seven bullock-hides, it struck
The shield of Ajax. Through the brass and through
Six folds of hides the irresistible spear 320
Cut its swift way, and at the seventh was stopped.
Then high-born Ajax cast his massive spear
In turn, and drove it through the fair, round shield
Of Priam's son. Through that bright buckler went
The rapid weapon, pierced the well-wrought mail, 325
And tore the linen tunic at the flank.
But Hector stooped and thus avoided death.
They took their spears again, and, coming close,
Like lions in their hunger, or wild boars
Of fearful strength, joined battle. Priam's son 330

Sent his spear forward, striking in the midst
The shield of Ajax, but it broke not through
The brass; the metal turned the weapon's point.
While Ajax, springing onward, smote the shield
Of Hector, drave his weapon through, and checked 335
His enemy's swift advance, and wounded him
Upon the shoulder, and the black blood flowed.
Yet not for this did plumèd Hector cease
From combat, but went back, and, lifting up
A huge, black, craggy stone that near him lay, 340
Flung it with force against the middle boss
Of the broad sevenfold shield that Ajax bore.
The brass rang with the blow. Then Ajax raised
A heavier stone, and whirled it, putting forth
His arm's immeasurable strength; it brake 345
Through Hector's shield as if a millstone's weight
Had fallen. His knees gave way; he fell to earth
Headlong; yet still he kept his shield. At once
Apollo raised him up; and now with swords,
Encountering hand to hand, they both had flown 350
To wound each other, if the heralds sent
As messengers from Jupiter and men
Had not approached,—Idæus from the side
Of Troy, Talthybius from the Grecian host,—

Wise ancients both. Betwixt the twain they held 355

Their sceptres, and the sage Idæus spake:—

“Cease to contend, dear sons, in deadly fray;

Ye both are loved by cloud-compelling Jove,

And both are great in war, as all men know.

The night is come; be then the night obeyed.” 360

And Telamonian Ajax answered thus:—

“Idæus, first let Hector speak of this,

For he it was who challenged to the field

The bravest of the Grecian host, and I

Shall willingly obey if he obeys.” 365

To him in turn the plumèd Hector said:—

“Ajax, although God gave thee bulk and strength

And prudence, and in mastery of the spear

Thou dost excel the other Greeks, yet now

Pause we from battle and the rivalry 370

Of prowess for this day. Another time

We haply may renew the fight till fate

Shall part us and bestow the victory

On one of us. But now the night is here,

And it is good to obey the night, that thou 375

May'st gladden at the fleet the Greeks and all

Thy friends and comrades, and that I in turn

May give the Trojan men and long-robed dames,

In the great city where King Priam reigns,
Cause to rejoice,—the dames who pray for me, 380
Thronging the hallowed temple. Let us now
Each with the other leave some noble gift,
That all men, Greek or Trojan, thus may say:
‘They fought indeed in bitterness of heart,
But they were reconciled, and parted friends.’” 385

He spake, and gave a silver-studded sword
And scabbard with its fair embroidered belt;
And Ajax gave a girdle brightly dyed
With purple. Then they both departed,—one
To join the Grecian host, and one to meet 390
The Trojan people, who rejoiced to see
Hector alive, unwounded, and now safe
From the great might and irresistible arm
Of Ajax. Straightway to the town they led
Him for whose life they scarce had dared to hope. 395
And Ajax also by the well-armed Greeks,
Exulting in his feats of arms, was brought
To noble Agamemnon. When the chiefs
Were in his tents, the monarch sacrificed
A bullock of five summers to the son 400
Of Saturn, sovereign Jupiter. They flayed
The carcass, dressed it, carved away the limbs,

Divided into smaller parts the flesh,
Fixed them on spits, and roasted them with care,
And drew them from the fire. And when the task 405
Was finished, and the banquet all prepared,
They feasted, and there was no guest who lacked
His equal part in that repast. The son
Of Atreus, Agamemnon, brave, and lord
Of wide dominions, gave the chine entire 410
To Ajax as his due. Now when the calls
Of thirst and hunger ceased, the aged chief
Nestor, whose words had ever seemed most wise,
Opened the council with this prudent speech:—

“Atrides, and ye other chiefs of Greece! 415
Full many a long-haired warrior of our host
Hath perished. Cruel Mars hath spilt their blood
Beside Scamander’s gentle stream; their souls
Have gone to Hades. Give thou, then, command
That all the Greeks to-morrow pause from war, 420
And come together at the early dawn,
And bring the dead in chariots drawn by mules
And oxen, and consume them near our fleet
With fire, that we, when we return from war,
May carry to our native land the bones, 425
And give them to the children of the slain.

And then will we go forth and heap from earth,
Upon the plain, a common tomb for all
Around the funereal pile, and build high towers
With speed beside it, which shall be alike 430
A bulwark for our navy and our host.
And let the entrance be a massive gate,
Through which shall pass an ample chariot-way.
And in a circle on its outer edge
Sink we a trench so deep that neither steeds 435
Nor men may pass, if these proud Trojans yet
Should, in the coming battles, press us sore."

He spake; the princes all approved his words.
Meanwhile, beside the lofty citadel
Of Ilium and at Priam's palace-gates 440
In turbulence and fear the Trojans held
A council, and the wise Antenor spake:—

"Hearken, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies,
To what my sober judgment bids me speak.
Send we the Argive Helen back with all 445
Her treasures; let the sons of Atreus lead
The dame away; for now we wage the war
After our faith is broken, and I deem
We cannot prosper till we make amends."

He spake, and sat him down. The noble chief 450

Paris, the fair-haired Helen's husband, rose
To answer him, and spake this wingèd speech:—

“Thy words, Antenor, please me not. Thy skill
Could offer better counsels. If those words
Were gravely meant, the gods have made thee mad. 455
But let me here, amid these knights of Troy,
Speak openly my mind. Give up my wife
I never will; but all the wealth I brought
With her from Argos I most willingly
Restore, with added treasures of my own.” 460

He said, and took his seat, and in the midst
Dardanian Priam rose, a counsellor
Of godlike wisdom, and thus sagely spake:—

“Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies!
I speak the thought that rises in my breast. 465
Take now, as ye are wont, your evening meal,
And set a watch and keep upon your guard;
But let Idæus to the hollow ships
Repair at morning, and to Atreus' sons—
To Agamemnon and his brother king— 470
Make known what Paris, author of this strife,
Proposes, and with fairly ordered speech
Ask further if they will consent to pause
From cruel battle till we burn the dead:

Then be the war renewed till fate shall part 475
The hosts and give to one the victory."

He spake. The assembly listened and obeyed;
All through the camp in groups they took their meal.

But with the morn Idæus visited
The hollow ships, and found the Achaian chiefs, 480
Followers of Mars, in council near the prow
Of Agamemnon's bark; and, standing there,
The loud-voiced herald spake his message thus:—

"Ye sons of Atreus, and ye other chiefs
Of all the tribes of Greece, I come to you 485
From Priam and the eminent men of Troy,
To say, if it be pleasing to your ears,
What Alexander, author of the war,
Proposes. All the wealth which in his ships
He brought to Troy—would he had perished first!— 490
He will, with added treasures of his own,
Freely restore; but her who was the wife
Of gallant Menelaus he denies
To render back, though all who dwell in Troy
Join to demand it. I am furthermore 495
Bidden to ask if you consent to pause
From cruel battle till we burn our dead:
Then be the war renewed till fate shall part
The hosts and give to one the victory."

He spake; and all were silent for a space. 500
Then spake at length the valiant Diomed:—
“Let none consent to take the Trojan’s goods,
Nor even Helen; for a child may see
The utter ruin hanging over Troy.”

He spake. The admiring Greeks confirmed with shouts
The words of Diomed the knight, and thus 506
King Agamemnon to Idæus said:—

“Idæus, thou thyself hast heard the Greeks
Pronounce their answer. What to them seems good
Pleases me also. For the slain, I give 510
Consent to burn them; to the dead we bear
No hatred; when they fall the rite of fire
Should soon be paid. Let Juno’s husband, Jove
The Thunderer, bear witness to our truce.”

The monarch spake, and raised to all the gods 515
His sceptre, while Idæus took his way
To hallowed Ilium. There in council sat
Trojans and Dardans, waiting his return.
He came, and standing in the midst declared
His message. Then they all went forth in haste, 520
Some to collect the slain and some to fell
Trees in the forest. From their well-benched ships
The Achaians also issued, some to bring
The dead together, some to gather wood.

Now from the smooth deep ocean-stream the sun 525
Began to climb the heavens, and with new rays
Smote the surrounding fields. The Trojans met,
But found it hard to know their dead again.
They washed away the clotted blood, and laid —
Shedding hot tears—the bodies on the cars. 530
And since the mighty Priam's word forbade
All wailing, silently they bore away
Their slaughtered friends, and heaped them on the pyre
With aching hearts, and, when they had consumed
The dead with fire, returned to hallowed Troy. 535
The nobly-armed Achaians also heaped
Their slaughtered warriors on the funeral pile
With aching hearts; and when they had consumed
Their dead with fire they sought their hollow ships.
And ere the morning came, while earth was gray 540
With twilight, by the funeral pile arose
A chosen band of Greeks, who, going forth,
Heaped round it from the earth a common tomb
For all, and built a wall and lofty towers
Near it,—a bulwark for the fleet and host. 545
And in the wall they fitted massive gates,
Through which there passed an ample chariot-way;
And on its outer edge they sank a trench,—

Broad, deep,—and planted it with pointed stakes.
So labored through the night the long-haired Greeks. 550

The gods who sat beside the Thunderer Jove
Admired the mighty labor of the Greeks;
But Neptune, he who shakes the earth, began:—

“O Father Jove, henceforth will any one
Of mortal men consult the immortal gods? 555
Seest thou not how the long-haired Greeks have reared
A wall before their navy, and have drawn
A trench around it, yet have brought the gods
No liberal hecatombs? Now will the fame
Of this their work go forth wherever shines 560
The light of day, and men will quite forget
The wall which once we built with toiling hands—
Phœbus Apollo and myself—around
The city of renowned Laomedon.”

And cloud-compelling Jove in wrath replied:— 565
“Earth-shaking power! what words are these? Some god
Of meaner rank and feebler arm than thou
Might haply dread the work the Greeks have planned.
But as for thee, thy glory shall be known
Wherever shines the day; and when at last 570
The crested Greeks, departing in their ships,
Shall seek their native coasts, do thou o’erthrow

The wall they built, and sink it in the deep,
And cover the great shore again with sand.
Thus shall their bulwark vanish from the plain." 575

So talked they with each other while the sun
Was setting. But the Achaians now had brought
Their labors to an end; they slew their steers
Beside the tents and shared the evening meal,
While many ships had come to land with store 580
Of wine from Lemnos, which Euneus sent,—
Euneus whom Hypsipyle brought forth
To Jason, shepherd of the people. These
Brought wine, a thousand measures, as a gift
To Agamemnon and his brother king, 585
The sons of Atreus. But the long-haired Greeks
Bought for themselves their wines; some gave their brass,
And others shining steel; some bought with hides,
And some with steers, and some with slaves, and thus
Prepared an ample banquet. Through the night 590
Feasted the long-haired Greeks. The Trojan host
And their auxiliar warriors banqueted
Within the city-walls. Through all that night
The Great Disposer, Jove, portended woe
To both with fearful thunderings. All were pale 595
With terror; from their beakers all poured wine

Upon the ground, and no man dared to drink
Who had not paid to Saturn's mighty son
The due libation. Then they laid them down
To rest, and so received the balm of sleep.

600

BOOK VIII.

NOW Morn in saffron robes had shed her light
O'er all the earth, when Jove the Thunderer
Summoned the gods to council on the heights
Of many-peaked Olympus. He addressed
The assembly, and all listened as he spake: —

5

“Hear, all ye gods and all ye goddesses!
While I declare the thought within my breast.
Let none of either sex presume to break
The law I give, but cheerfully obey,
That my design may sooner be fulfilled.
Whoever, stealing from the rest, shall seek
To aid the Grecian cause, or that of Troy,
Back to Olympus, scourged and in disgrace,
Shall he be brought, or I will seize and hurl
The offender down to rayless Tartarus,
Deep, deep in the great gulf below the earth,
With iron gates and threshold forged of brass,
As far beneath the shades as earth from heaven.

10

15

Then shall he learn how greatly I surpass
All other gods in power. Try if ye will, 20
Ye gods, that all may know: suspend from heaven
A golden chain; let all the immortal host
Cling to it from below: ye could not draw,
Strive as ye might, the all-disposing Jove
From heaven to earth. And yet, if I should choose 25
To draw it upward to me, I should lift,
With it and you, the earth itself and sea
Together, and I then would bind the chain
Around the summit of the Olympian mount,
And they should hang aloft. So far my power 30
Surpasses all the power of gods and men."

He spake; and all the great assembly, hushed
In silence, wondered at his threatening words,
Until at length the blue-eyed Pallas said:—

"Our Father, son of Saturn, mightiest 35
Among the potentates, we know thy power
Is not to be withstood, yet are we moved
With pity for the warlike Greeks, who bear
An evil fate and waste away in war.
If such be thy command, we shall refrain 40
From mingling in the combat, yet will aid
The Greeks with counsel which may be their guide,
Lest by thy wrath they perish utterly."

The Cloud-compeller Jove replied, and smiled:—
“Tritonia, daughter dear, be comforted. 45

I spake not in the anger of my heart,
And I have naught but kind intents for thee.”

He spake, and to his chariot yoked the steeds,
Fleet, brazen-footed, and with flowing manes
Of gold, and put his golden armor on, 50
And took the golden scourge, divinely wrought,
And, mounting, touched the coursers with the lash
To urge them onward. Not unwillingly
Flew they between the earth and starry heaven,
Until he came to Ida, moist with springs 55
And nurse of savage beasts, and to the height
Of Gargarus, where lay his sacred field,
And where his fragrant altar fumed. He checked
Their course, and there the Father of the gods
And men released them from the yoke and caused 60
A cloud to gather round them. Then he sat,
Exulting in the fulness of his might,
Upon the summit, whence his eye beheld
The towers of Ilium and the ships of Greece.

Now in their tents the long-haired Greeks had shared 65
A hasty meal, and girded on their arms.
The Trojans, also, in their city armed

Themselves for war, as eager for the fight,
Though fewer; for a hard necessity
Forced them to combat for their little ones 70
And wives. They set the city-portals wide,
And forth the people issued, foot and horse
Together, and a mighty din arose.

And now, when host met host, their shields and spears
Were mingled in disorder; men of might 75
Encountered, cased in mail, and bucklers clashed
Their bosses; loud the clamor: cries of pain
And boastful shouts arose from those who fell
And those who slew, and earth was drenched with blood.

While yet 't was morning, and the holy light 80
Of day grew bright, the men of both the hosts
Were smitten and were slain; but when the sun
Stood high in middle heaven, the All-Father took
His golden scales, and in them laid the fates
Which bring the sleep of death,—the fate of those 85
Who tamed the Trojan steeds, and those who warred
For Greece in brazen armor. By the midst
He held the balance, and, behold, the fate
Of Greece in that day's fight sank down until
It touched the nourishing earth, while that of Troy 90
Rose and flew upward toward the spacious heaven.

With that the Godhead thundered terribly
From Ida's height, and sent his lightnings down
Among the Achaian army. They beheld
In mute amazement and grew pale with fear.

95

Then neither dared Idomeneus remain,
Nor Agamemnon, on the ground, nor stayed
The chieftains Ajax, ministers of Mars.
Gerenian Nestor, guardian of the Greeks,
Alone was left behind, and he remained
Unwillingly. A steed of those that drew
His car was sorely wounded by a shaft
Which Alexander, fair-haired Helen's spouse,
Sent from his bow. It pierced the forehead where
The mane begins, and where a wound is death.
The arrow pierced him to the brain; he reared
And whirled in torture with the wound, and scared
His fellow-coursers. While the aged man
Hastened to sever with his sword the thongs
That bound him to the car, the rapid steeds
Of Hector bore their valiant master on
With the pursuing crowd. The aged chief
Had perished then, if gallant Diomed
Had not perceived his plight. He lifted up
His voice, and, shouting to Ulysses, said:—

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“High-born Ulysses, man of subtle shifts,
Son of Laertes, whither dost thou flee?
Why like a coward turn thy back? Beware,
Lest there some weapon smite thee. Stay and guard
This aged warrior from his furious foe.”

120

So spake he; but the much-enduring man,
Ulysses, heard not the reproof, and passed
Rapidly toward the hollow ships of Greece.
Tydides, single-handed, made his way
Among the foremost warriors, till he stood
Before the horses of the aged son
Of Neleus, and in wingèd accents said:—

125

“The younger warriors press thee sore, old chief!
Thy strength gives way; the weariness of age
Is on thee; thy attendant is not strong;
Thy steeds are slow. Mount, then, my car, and see
What Trojan horses are; how rapidly
They turn to right and left, and chase and flee.
I took them from the terror of the field,
Æneas. To our servants leave thine own,
While we with these assault the Trojan knights,
And teach even Hector that the spear I wield
Can make as furious havoc as his own.”

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135

He spake; and Nestor, the Gerenian knight,

Complied. The two attendants, valiant men, — 140
Sthenelus and the good Eurymedon, —
Took charge of Nestor's steeds. The chieftains climbed
The car of Diomed, and Nestor took
Into his hand the embroidered reins and lashed
The horses with the scourge. They quickly came 145
To Hector. As the Trojan hastened on,
The son of Tydeus hurled a spear; it missed,
But spared not Eniopeus, him who held
The reins, the hero's charioteer, and son
Of brave Thebæus. In the breast between 150
The paps it smote him; from the car he fell,
And the swift horses started back; his soul
And strength passed from him. Hector bitterly
Grieved for his death, yet left him where he fell,
And sought another fitting charioteer. 155
Nor had the fiery coursers long to wait
A guide, for valiant Archeptolemus,
The son of Iphitus, was near at hand.
And him he caused to mount the chariot drawn
By his fleet steeds, and gave his hand the reins. 160

Then great had been the slaughter; fearful deeds
Had then been done; the Trojans had been scared
Into their town like lambs into the fold, —

Had not the Father of the immortal gods
And mortal men beheld, and from on high 165
Terribly thundered, sending to the earth
A bolt of fire. He flung it down before
The car of Diomed; and fiercely glared
The blazing sulphur; both the frightened steeds
Cowered trembling by the chariot. Nestor's hand 170
Let fall the embroidered reins; his spirit sank
With fear, and thus he said to Diomed:—

“Tydides, turn thy firm-paced steeds, and flee.
Dost thou not see that victory from Jove
Attends thee not? To-day doth Saturn's son 175
Award the glory to the Trojan chief.
Hereafter he will make it ours, if such
Be his good pleasure. No man, though he be
The mightiest among men, can thwart the will
Of Jupiter, with whom abides all power.” 180

The great in battle, Diomed, replied:—
“Truly, O ancient man, thou speakest well;
But this it is that grieves me to the heart,—
That Hector to the Trojan host will say,
'I put to flight Tydides, and he sought 185
Shelter among his ships.' Thus will he boast
Hereafter; may earth open then for me!”

And Nestor, the Gerenian knight, rejoined : —
“What, son of warlike Tydeus, hast thou said?
Though Hector call thee faint of heart, and weak, 190
The Trojans and Dardanians, and the wives
Of the stout-hearted Trojans armed with shields,
Whose husbands in their youthful prime thy hand
Hath laid in dust, will not believe his words.”

Thus having said, he turned the firm-paced steeds 195
Rearward, and mingled with the flying crowd.
And now the Trojans and their leader gave
A mighty cry, and poured on them a storm
Of deadly darts, and crested Hector raised
His thundering voice and shouted after them : — 200

“O son of Tydeus! the swift-riding Greeks
Have honored thee beyond all other men,
At banquets, with high place and delicate meats
And flowing cups. They will despise thee now,
For thou art like a woman. Timorous girl! 205
Take thyself hence, and never think that I
Shall yield to thee, that thou may'st climb our towers
And bear away our women in thy ships;
For I shall give thee first the doom of death.”

He spake; and Diomed, in doubtful mood, 210
Questioned his spirit whether he should turn

His steeds and fight with Hector. Thrice the thought
Arose within his mind, and thrice on high
Uttered the all-forecasting Jupiter
His thunder from the Idæan mount, a sign 215
Of victory changing to the Trojan side.
Then Hector to the Trojans called aloud:—

“Trojans and Lycians all, and ye who close
In deadly fight, the sons of Dardanus!
Acquit yourselves like men, my friends; recall 220
Your fiery valor now, for I perceive
The son of Saturn doth award to me
Victory and vast renown, and to the Greeks
Destruction. Fools! who built this slender wall
Which we condemn, which cannot stand before 225
The strength I bring; our steeds can overleap
The trench they digged. When I shall reach their fleet,
Remember the consuming power of fire,
That I may give their vessels to the flames,
And hew the Achaians down beside their prows, 230
While they are wrapped in the bewildering smoke.”

He spake; and then he cheered his coursers thus:—
“Xanthus, Podargus, Lampus nobly bred,
And Æthon, now repay the generous care,
The pleasant grain which my Andromache, 235

Daughter of great Eëtion, largely gives.
She mingles wine that ye may drink at will
Ere yet she ministers to me, who boast
To be her youthful husband. Let us now
Pursue with fiery haste, that we may seize
The shield of Nestor, the great fame of which
Has reached to heaven,—an orb of massive gold
Even to the handles, Let us from the limbs
Of Diomed, the tamer of fleet steeds,
Strip off the glorious mail that Vulcan forged:
This done, our hope may be that all the Greeks
Will climb their galleys and depart to-night.”

240

245

So boasted he; but queenly Juno's ire
Was kindled, and she shuddered on her throne
Till great Olympus trembled. Thus she spake
To Neptune, mighty ruler of the deep:—

250

“Earth-shaker! thou who rulest far and wide!
Is there no pity for the perishing Greeks
Within that breast of thine? They bring to thee
At Helicè and Ægæ costly gifts
And many, wherefore thy desire should be
That they may win the victory. If the gods
Who favor the Achaians should combine
To drive the Trojans back, and hold in check

255

High-thundering Jupiter, the God would sit 260
In sullen grief on Ida's top alone."

Earth-shaking Neptune answered in disdain:—
"O Juno, rash in speech! what words are these?
Think not that I can wish to join the gods
In conflict with the monarch Jupiter, 265
The son of Saturn, mightier than we all."

So held they colloquy. Meanwhile the space
Betwixt the galleys and the trench and wall
Was crowded close with steeds and shielded men;
For Hector, son of Priam, terrible 270
As Mars the lightning-footed, drave them on
Before him. Jove decreed him such renown.
And now would he have given that noble fleet
To the consuming flame, if Juno, queen
Of heaven, had not beheld, and moved the heart 275
Of Agamemnon to exhort the Greeks
That they should turn and combat. With quick steps
He passed beside the fleet, among the tents,
Bearing in his strong hand his purple robe,
And climbed the huge black galley which had brought 280
Ulysses to the war,—for in the midst
It lay, and thence the king might send his voice
To either side, as far as to the tents

Of Ajax and Achilles, who had moored
Their galleys at the different extremes 285
Of the long camp, confiding in their might
Of arm and their own valor. Thence he called,
With loud, clear utterance, to the Achaian host :—
“O Greeks! shame on ye! cravens who excel
In form alone! Where now are all the boasts 290
Of your invincible valor,—the vain words
Ye uttered pompously when at the feast
In Lemnos sitting ye devoured the flesh
Of hornèd beeves, and drank from bowls of wine,
Flower-crowned, and bragged that each of you would be
A match for fivescore Trojans, or for twice 296
Fivescore? And now we all are not a match
For Hector singly, who will give our fleet
Soon to consuming flames. O Father Jove,
Was ever mighty monarch visited 300
By thee with such affliction, or so robbed
Of high renown! And yet in my good ship,
Bound to this luckless coast, I never passed
By thy fair altars that I did not burn
The fat and thighs of oxen, with a prayer 305
That I might sack the well-defended Troy.
Now be at least one wish of mine fulfilled,—

That we may yet escape and get us hence;
Nor let the Trojans thus destroy the Greeks."

He spake, and wept. The All-Father, pitying him, ³¹⁰
Consented that his people should escape
The threatened ruin. Instantly he sent
His eagle, bird of surest augury,
Which, bearing in his talons a young fawn,
The offspring of a nimble-footed roe, ³¹⁵
Dropped it at the fair altar where the Greeks
Paid sacrifice to Panomphæan Jove.

And they, when they beheld, and knew that Jove
Had sent the bird, took courage, rallying,
And rushed against the Trojans. Then no chief ³²⁰
Of all the Greeks—though many they—could boast
That he before Tydides urged his steeds
To sudden speed and drave them o'er the trench,
And mingled in the combat. First of all
He struck down Agelaus, Phradmon's son, ³²⁵
Armed as he was, who turned his car to fly,
And as he turned, Tydides with his spear
Transfixed his back between the shoulder-blades,
' And drave the weapon through his breast. He fell
To earth, his armor clashing with his fall. ³³⁰
Then Agamemnon followed, and with him

His brother Menelaus; after these
 The chieftains Ajax, fearful in their strength;
 Idomeneus, and he who bore his arms, —
 Meriones, like Mars in battle-field; 335
 Eurypylus, Evæmon's glorious son;
 And ninthly Teucer came, who bent his bow
 Beneath the shield of Ajax Telamon, —
 For Ajax moved his shield from side to side,
 And thence the archer looked abroad, and aimed 340
 His arrows thence. Whoever in the throng
 Was struck fell lifeless. Teucer all the while,
 As hides a child behind his mother's robe,
 Sheltered himself by Ajax, whose great shield
 Concealed the chief from sight. What Trojan first 345
 Did faithful Teucer slay? Orsilochnus,
 Dætor, and Ophelestes, Ormenus,
 Chromius, and Lycophontes nobly born,
 And Hamopaon, Polyæmon's son,
 And Melanippus, — one by one the shafts 350
 Of Teucer stretched them on their mother earth.
 Then Agamemnon, king of men, rejoiced
 As he beheld him, with his sturdy bow,
 Breaking the serried phalanxes of Troy;
 And came, and, standing near, bespoke him thus: — 355

“Beloved Teucer! son of Telamon,
Prince of the people! ever be thy shafts
Aimed thus, and thou shalt be the light and pride
Of Greece, and of thy father Telamon,
Who reared thee from a little child with care 360
In his own halls, though spurious was thy birth.
Go on to do him honor, though he now
Be far away. And here I say to thee,—
And I will keep my word,—if Jupiter
The ægis-bearer and Minerva deign 365
To let me level the strong walls of Troy,
To thee will I assign the noblest prize
After my own,—a tripod, or two steeds
And chariot, or a wife to share thy bed.”

And thus the blameless Teucer made reply:— 370
“Why, glorious son of Atreus, wouldst thou thus
Admonish me, while yet I do my best,
And pause not in the combat? From the time
When we began to drive the enemy back
To Ilium, I have smitten and have slain 375
Their warriors with my bow. Eight barbèd shafts
I sent, and each has pierced some warlike youth;
But this fierce wolf-dog have I failed to strike.”

He spake, and sent another arrow forth

At Hector with an eager aim. It missed 380
Its mark, but struck Gorgythion down, the brave
And blameless son of Priam; through his breast
The arrow went. Fair Castianira brought
The warrior forth,—a dame from Æsymba,
Beautiful as a goddess. As within 385
A garden droops a poppy to the ground,
Bowed by its weight and by the rains of spring,
So drooped his head within the heavy casque.

And then did Teucer send another shaft
At Hector, eager still to smite. It missed 390
Its aim again, for Phœbus turned aside
The arrow, but it struck the charioteer
Of Hector, Archeptolemus the brave,
When rushing to the fight, and pierced his breast
Close to the nipple; from the car he fell, 395
The swift steeds started back, and from his limbs
The life and strength departed. A deep grief
For his slain charioteer came darkly o'er
The mind of Hector, yet, though sorrowing,
He left him where he fell, and straightway called 400
Cebriones, his brother, who was near,
To mount and take the reins. Cebriones
Heard and obeyed. Then from the shining car

Leaped Hector with a mighty cry, and seized
A ponderous stone, and, bent to crush him, ran 405
At Teucer, who had from his quiver drawn
One of his sharpest arrows, placing it
Upon the bowstring. As he drew the bow,
The strong-armed Hector hurled the jagged stone,
And smote him near the shoulder, where the neck 410
And breast are sundered by the collar-bone, —
A fatal spot. The bowstring brake; the arm
Fell nerveless; on his knees the archer sank,
And dropped the bow. Then did not Ajax leave
His fallen brother to the foe, but walked 415
Around him, sheltering him beneath his shield,
Till two dear friends of his — Menestheus, son
Of Echius, and Alastor nobly born —
Approached, and took him up and carried him,
Heavily groaning, to the hollow ships. 420

Then did Olympian Jove again inspire
The Trojan host with valor, and they drave
The Achaians backward to the yawning trench.
Then Hector came, with fury in his eyes,
Among the foremost warriors. As a hound, 425
Sure of his own swift feet, attacks behind
The lion or wild boar, and tears his flank,

Yet warily observes him as he turns,
So Hector followed close the long-haired Greeks,
And ever slew the hindmost as they fled. 430

Yet now, when they in flight had crossed again
The trench and palisades, and many a one
Had died by Trojan hands, they made a halt
Before their ships, and bade each other stand,
And lifted up their hands and prayed aloud 435
To all the gods; while Hector, urging on
His long-maned steeds, and with stern eyes that seemed
The eyes of Gorgon or of murderous Mars,
Hither and thither swept across the field.

The white-armed Juno saw, and, sorrowing, 440
Addressed Minerva with these wingèd words:—

“Ah me! thou daughter of the God who bears
The ægis, shall we not descend to aid
The perishing Greeks in their extremity?
A cruel doom is theirs, to fall, destroyed 445
By one man’s rage,—the terrible assault
Of Hector, son of Priam, who has made
Insufferable havoc in the field.”

And thus in turn the blue-eyed Pallas spake:—
“That warrior long ere this had lost his life, 450
Slain by the Greeks on his paternal soil,

But that my father's mind is warped by wrath.
Unjust to me and harsh, he thwarts my aims,
Forgetting all I did for Hercules,
His son, — how often, when Eurystheus set 455
A task too hard for him, I saved his life.
To heaven he raised his eyes and wept, and Jove
Despatched me instantly to succor him.
And yet if I, in my forecasting mind,
Had known all this when he was bid to bring 460
From strong-walled Erebus the dog of hell,
He had not safely crossed the gulf of Styx.
But now Jove hates me; now he grants the wish
Of Thetis, who hath kissed his knees and touched
His beard caressingly, and prayed that he 465
Would crown the overthrower of walled towns,
Achilles, with great honor. Well, the time
Will come when he shall call me yet again
His dear Minerva. Hasten now to yoke
For us thy firm-paced steeds, while in the halls 470
Of ægis-bearing Jupiter I brace
My armor on for war, — and I shall see
If Hector of the beamy helm, the son
Of Priam, will rejoice when we appear
Upon the field again. Assuredly 475

The men of Troy shall die, to feast the birds
Of prey and dogs beside the Grecian fleet."

She ended, and the white-armed deity
Juno obeyed her. Juno the august,
The mighty Saturn's daughter, hastily 480
Caparisoned the golden-bitted steeds.
Meanwhile, Minerva on the palace-floor
Of Jupiter let drop the gorgeous robe
Of many hues, which her own hands had wrought,
And, putting on the Cloud-compeller's mail, 485
Stood armed for cruel war. And then she climbed
The glorious car, and took in hand the spear—
Huge, heavy, strong—with which she overthrows
The serried phalanxes of valiant men
Whene'er this daughter of the Almighty One 490
Is angered. Juno bore the lash, and urged
The coursers to their speed. The gates of heaven
Opened before them of their own accord,—
Gates guarded by the Hours, on whom the care
Of the great heaven and of Olympus rests, 495
To open or to close the wall of cloud.
Through these they guided their impatient steeds.
From Ida Jupiter beheld, in wrath,
And summoned Iris of the golden wings,

And bade her do this errand: "Speed thee hence, 500
Fleet Iris! turn them back; allow them not
Thus to defy me: it is not for them
To engage with me in war. I give my word, —
Nor shall it lack fulfilment, — I will make
The swift steeds lame that draw their car, and hurl 505
The riders down, and dash the car itself
To fragments. Ten long years shall wear away
Before they cease to suffer from the wounds
Made by the thunderbolt. Minerva thus
May learn the fate of those who strive with Jove. 510
With Juno I am less displeased, for she
Is ever bent to thwart my purposes."

He spake; and Iris, with the tempest's speed
Departing, bore the message from the heights
Of Ida to the great Olympus, where, 515
Among the foremost passes of the mount,
All seamed with hollow vales, she met and stayed
The pair, delivering thus the word of Jove: —

"Now whither haste ye? What strange madness fires
Your breasts? The son of Saturn suffers not 520
That ye befriend the Greeks. He threatens thus, —
And will fulfil his threat, — that he will make
The coursers lame that draw your car, and hurl

The riders down, and dash the car itself
 To fragments, and that ten long years must pass 525
 Ere ye shall cease to suffer from the wounds
 Made by the thunderbolt. So shalt thou learn,
 O Pallas! what it is to strive with Jove.
 With Juno is he less displeased, for she
 Is ever bent to thwart his purposes; 530
 But thou, he says, art guilty above all,
 And shameless as a hound, if thou dare lift
 Thy massive spear against thy father Jove."

So spake fleet-footed Iris, and withdrew;
 And thus again to Pallas Juno said:— 535

"Child of the Ægis-bearer! let us strive
 With Jove no longer for the sake of men,
 But let one perish and another live,
 As chance may rule the hour, and let the God,
 Communing with his secret mind, mete out 540
 To Greeks and Trojans their just destiny."

She spake, and turned the firm-paced coursers back,
 The coursers with fair-flowing manes. The Hours
 Unyoked them, bound them to the ambrosial stalls,
 And leaned against the shining walls the car; 545
 While Juno and Minerva went among
 The other deities and took their place

Upon their golden seats, though sad at heart.
Then with his steeds, and in his bright-wheeled car,
Came Jove from Ida to the dwelling-place 550
Of gods upon Olympus. There did he
Who shakes the islands loose the steeds and bring
The chariot to its place, and o'er it spread
Its covering of lawn. The Thunderer
Seated himself upon his golden throne, 555
The great Olympus trembling as he stepped;
While Juno and Minerva sat apart
Together, nor saluted him, nor asked
Of aught; but he perceived their thoughts and said: —
“Juno and Pallas! why so sad? Not long 560
Ye toiled in glorious battle to destroy
The Trojans, whom ye hold in bitter hate:
This strength of mine, and this invincible arm
Not all the gods upon the Olympian mount
Can turn to flight, while your fair limbs were seized 565
With trembling ere ye entered on the shock
And havoc of the war. Now let me say —
And well the event would have fulfilled my words —
That, smitten with the thunder from my hand,
Your chariots never would have brought you back 570
To this Olympus and the abode of gods.”

He spake; while Pallas and the queen of heaven
Repined with close-pressed lips, and in their hearts
Devised new mischiefs for the Trojan race.

Silent Minerva sat, nor dared express

575

The anger that she bore her father Jove;

But Juno could not curb her wrath, and spake:—

“What words, austere Saturnius, hast thou said?

Thou art, we know, invincible in might;

Yet must we sorrow for the heroic Greeks,

580

Who, by a cruel fate, are perishing.

We stand aloof from war, if thou require;

Yet would we counsel the Achaian host,

Lest by thy wrath they perish utterly.”

And then the Cloud-compeller, answering, said:—

585

“O Juno, large-eyed and august, if thou

Look forth to-morrow, thou shalt then behold

The all-powerful son of Saturn laying waste

With greater havoc still the mighty host

Of warlike Greeks. For Hector, great in war,

590

Shall pause not from the conflict, till he rouse

The swift-paced son of Peleus at the ships,

When, pent in narrow space, the armies fight

For slain Patroclus: such the will of fate.

As for thyself, I little heed thy rage:

595

Not even shouldst thou wander to the realm
Where earth and ocean end, where Saturn sits
Beside Iapetus, and neither light
Of overgoing suns nor breath of wind
Refreshes them, but gulfs of Tartarus
Surround them,—shouldst thou even thither bend
Thy way, I shall not heed thy rage, who art
Beyond all others shamelessly perverse.”

600

He ceased; but white-armed Juno answered not.
And now into the sea the sun's bright light
Went down, and o'er the foodful earth was drawn
Night's shadow. Most unwillingly the sons
Of Troy beheld the sunset. To the Greeks
Eagerly wished the welcome darkness came.

605

Then from the fleet illustrious Hector led
The Trojans, and beside the eddy stream,
In a clear space uncumbered by the slain,
Held council. There, alighting from their cars,
They listened to the words that Hector spake,—
Hector, beloved of Jove. He held a spear,
In length eleven cubits, with a blade
Of glittering brass, bound with a ring of gold.

610

615

On this he leaned, and spake these wingèd words:—

“Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies.
But now I thought that, having first destroyed

620

The Achaian host and fleet, we should return
This night to wind-swept Ilium. To their aid
The darkness comes, and saves the Greeks, and saves
Their galleys ranged along the ocean-side.

Obeys we, then, the dark-browed night; prepare 625
Our meal; unyoke the steeds with flowing manes,
And set their food before them. Bring at once
Oxen and fatlings of the flock from town,
And from your dwellings bread and pleasant wine.

And let us gather store of wood, to feed 630
A multitude of blazing fires all night,
Till Morning, daughter of the Dawn, appear,—
Fires that shall light the sky, lest in the hours
Of darkness with their ships the long-haired Greeks
Attempt escape across the mighty deep. 635

And, that they may not climb their decks unharmed,
Let every foeman bear a wound to cure
At home,—an arrow-wound or gash of spear,
Given as he leaps on board. So other foes
Shall dread a conflict with the knights of Troy. 640

And let the heralds, dear to Jove, command
That all grown youths and hoary-headed men
Keep watch about the city in the towers
Built by the gods; and let the feebler sex
Kindle large fires upon their hearths at home; 645

And let the guard be strengthened, lest the foe
Should steal into the city while its sons
Are all abroad. Thus let it be till morn,
Brave Trojans! I but speak of what the time
Requires, and on the morrow I shall speak 650
Of what the Trojan knights have then to do.
My prayer to Jove and to the other gods,
And my hope is, that I may drive away
These curs, brought hither by an evil fate
In their black ships. All night will we keep watch, 655
And, arming, with the early morn renew
The desperate conflict at the hollow ships.
Then shall I see if valiant Diomed
Tydides has the power to make me leave
The Grecian galleys for the city-walls, 660
Or whether I shall slay him with my spear
And take his bloody spoils. To-morrow's sun
Will make his valor known, if he withstand
The assault of this my weapon. Yet I think
The sunrise will behold him slain among 665
The first, with many comrades lying round.
Would that I knew myself as certainly
Secure from death and the decays of age,
And to be held in honor like the gods

Apollo and Minerva, as I know

670

This day will bring misfortune to the Greeks!"

So Hector spake, and all the Trojan host
Applauded; from the yoke forthwith they loosed
The sweaty steeds, and bound them to the cars
With halters; to the town they sent in haste
For oxen and the fatlings of the flock,
And to their homes for bread and pleasant wine,
And gathered fuel in large store. The winds
Bore up the fragrant fumes from earth to heaven.

675

So, high in hope, they sat the whole night through
In warlike lines, and many watch-fires blazed.
As when in heaven the stars look brightly forth
Round the clear-shining moon, while not a breeze
Stirs in the depths of air, and all the stars
Are seen, and gladness fills the shepherd's heart,
So many fires in sight of Ilium blazed,
Lit by the sons of Troy, between the ships
And eddying Xanthus: on the plain there shone
A thousand; fifty warriors by each fire
Sat in its light. Their steeds beside the cars—
Champing their oats and their white barley—stood,
And waited for the golden morn to rise.

680

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690

BOOK IX.

THE Trojans thus kept watch; while through the night
The power of Flight, companion of cold Fear,
Wrought on the Greeks, and all their bravest men
Were bowed beneath a sorrow hard to bear.
As when two winds upturn the fishy deep, — 5
The north wind and the west, that suddenly
Blow from the Thracian coast; the black waves rise
At once, and fling the sea-weed to the shore, —
Thus were the Achaians troubled in their hearts.
Atrides, deeply grieving, walked the camp, 10
And bade the clear-voiced heralds call by name
To council all the chiefs, but not aloud.
The king himself among the foremost gave
The summons. Sadly that assembly took
Their seats; and Agamemnon in the midst 15
Rose, shedding tears, — as down a lofty rock,
Darkening its face, a fountain's waters flow, —
And, deeply sighing, thus addressed the Greeks: —

“O friends! the chiefs and princes of the Greeks!
Saturnian Jove hath in an evil snare 20
Most cruelly entangled me. He gave
His promise once that I should overthrow
This strong-walled Ilium, and return; but now
He meditates a fraud, and sends me back
To Argos without glory, and with loss 25
Of many warriors. Thus doth it seem good
Doubtless to Jove Almighty, who hath cast
The towers of many a city down to earth,
And will cast others down,—his might excels
All other might. But let us now obey, 30
As I shall counsel you, and in our ships
Haste to our own dear country; for I see
That Troy with its broad streets can ne’er be ours.”

He spake; and all were silent. Silent long
Remained the sorrow-stricken sons of Greece, 35
Till Diomed, the brave in battle, spake:—

“First of the chiefs I speak, to disapprove,
Atrides, thy rash purpose: ’t is my right
In council; nor, O king, be thou displeased.
Thou first among the Greeks hast taunted me 40
With lack of valor, calling me unapt
For war and weak of arm. The young and old

Have heard the taunt. One of two gifts the son
Of wily Saturn hath bestowed on thee:

High rank and rule o'er all the rest he gave, 45

But gave thee not the nobler quality

Of fortitude. Dost thou then truly deem

The Greeks unapt for war and weak of arm,

As thou hast said? Thou longest to return:

Go, then; the way is open; by the sea 50

The barks that brought thee from Mycenæ lie,

A numerous fleet. Yet others will remain —

Long-haired Achaians—till we overthrow

The city. Should they also pine for home,

Then let them flee, with all their ships; while I 55

With Sthenelus fight on until we make

An end of Troy,—for with the gods we came.”

He spake. The Greeks applauded; all admired

The words of the horse-tamer Diomed.

Nestor the knight then rose, and thus he spake:— 60

“O son of Tydeus, eminently brave

Art thou among thy comrades in the field,

And great in council. No one here condemns

The sentence thou hast given; among the Greeks

Is no one who denies what thou hast said; 65

Yet hast thou not said all. Thy years are few, —

So few, thou mightest be my youngest son;
And yet thou speakest wisely to the kings
Of Greece, and thy discourse is just and right.
Now I, who boast of far more years than thou, 70
Will speak of this that yet remains, and none —
Not even Agamemnon — will gainsay
What I advise. A wretch without a tie
Of kin, a lawless man without a home,
Is he who takes delight in civil strifes. 75
But let us now give way to the dark night,
And make our banquets ready. Let the guards
Lie down within the trenches which we digged
Without the wall: be this the young men's charge.
And thou, Atrides, do thou now begin, 80
Who art supreme, and make a feast for all
The elder chiefs; it shall become thee well:
Thy tents are full of wine, which ships from Thrace
Bring every day across the mighty deep,
And thou hast all things ready, and a host 85
Of menials. Then, when many throng the board,
Thou shalt defer to him who counsels thee
Most wisely; for the Greeks have urgent need
Of prudent counsels, when the foe so close
Beside our galleys lights his multitude 90

Of watch-fires. Who that sees them can rejoice?
This night will rescue or destroy our host."

He spake. They listened all, and willingly
Obeyed him. Forth in armor went the guards,
Led by the chieftain Thrasymedes, son 95
Of Nestor, by Ascalaphus, who claimed
His birth from Mars, and by Ialmenus
His brother, and Deïpyrus, with whom
There followed Aphareus, Meriones,
And Lycomedes, Creon's noble son. 100
Seven were the leaders of the guards; with each
A hundred youths in warlike order marched,
Bearing long spears; and when they reached the space
Between the trench and wall they sat them down,
And kindled fires and made their evening meal. 105

Atrides brought the assembled elder chiefs
To his pavilion, and before them set
A generous banquet. They put forth their hands
And shared the feast; and when the calls of thirst
And hunger ceased, the aged Nestor first 110
Began to counsel them; the chief, whose words
Had lately seemed of wisest import, now
Addressed the assembly with well-ordered speech:—
"Atrides Agamemnon, glorious king!

What I shall say begins and ends with thee, 115
For thou dost rule o'er many nations. Jove
Hath given to thee the sceptre, and the power
To make their laws, that thou may'st seek their good.
Thou, therefore, of all men, shouldst speak and hear
In council, and shouldst follow willingly 120
Another's judgment when it best promotes
The general weal; for all depends on thee.
Now let me say what seems to me most wise;
For better counsel none can give than this
Which now I meditate, and which to give 125
I purposed from the hour when thou, great king,
Didst bear the maid Briseis from the tent
Of the enraged Achilles, unapproved
By me, who strove to change thy rash design.
Then didst thou yield thee to thy haughty will, 130
And didst dishonor a most valiant man,
Whom the immortals honor. Thou didst take
And still dost keep the prize he fairly won.
Let it be now our study to appease
The hero with large gifts and soothing words." 135

Then Agamemnon, king of men, replied:—
"O ancient man, most truly hast thou named
My faults. I erred, and I deny it not.

That man indeed is equal to a host
Whom Jupiter doth love and honor thus, 140
Humbling the Achaian people for his sake.
And now, since, yielding to my wayward mood,
I erred, let me appease him, if I may,
With gifts of priceless worth. Before you all
I number them, — seven tripods which the fire 145
Hath never touched, six talents of pure gold,
And twenty shining caldrons, and twelve steeds
Of hardy frame, victorious in the race,
Whose feet have won me prizes in the games.
No beggar would he be, nor yet with store 150
Of gold unfurnished, in whose coffers lay
The prizes those swift steeds have brought to me.
Seven faultless women, skilled in household arts,
I give moreover, — Lesbians, whom I chose
When he o'erran the populous Lesbian isle, — 155
Damsels in beauty who excel their sex.
These I bestow, and with them I will send
Her whom I took away, — Briseis, pure —
I swear it with a mighty oath — as pure
As when she left his tent. All these I give 160
At once; and if by favor of the gods
We lay the mighty city of Priam waste,

He shall load down his galley with large store
Of gold and silver, entering first when we,
The Greeks, divide the spoil. Then may he choose 165
Twice ten young Trojan women, beautiful
Beyond their sex save Helen. If we come
Safe to Achaian Argos, richly stocked
With milky kine, he may become to me
A son-in-law, and cherished equally 170
With my sole son Orestes, who is reared
Most royally. Three daughters there, within
My stately palace-walls, — Chrysothemis,
Laodice, and Iphianassa, — dwell,
And he may choose among them, and may lead 175
Home to the house of Peleus her who best
Deserves his love. Nor need he to endow
The bride, for I will give an ampler dower
Than ever father to his daughter gave, —
Seven cities with thronged streets, — Cardamyle, 180
Enope, grassy Hira, Pheræ famed
Afar, Antheia with rich pasture-fields,
Æpeia beautiful, and Pedasus
With all its vineyards; all are near the sea,
And stand the last before you reach the coast 185
Of sandy Pylos. Rich in flocks and herds

Their dwellers are, and they will honor him
As if he were a god, and, ruled by him,
Will pay large tribute. These will I bestow,
Let but his anger cool and his resolve 190
Give way. 'T is Pluto who is deaf to prayer
And ne'er relents, and he, of all the gods,
Most hateful is to men. Now let the son
Of Peleus yield at length to me, who stand
Above him in authority and years." 195

Then answered Nestor the Gerenian knight:—
"Atrides Agamemnon! glorious king!
Gifts not to be contemned thou offerest
To Prince Achilles. Let us now despatch
A chosen embassy, who shall proceed 200
At once to where Pelides holds his tent.
I name the men; and cheerfully will they
Perform the duty: Phœnix, dear to Jove,
Shall be their leader, mighty Ajax next,
And then high-born Ulysses; heralds twain 205
Shall follow,—Hodius and Eurybates.
And now be water brought to cleanse our hands,
And charge be given that no ill-omened word
Be uttered, while we pray that Jupiter,
The son of Saturn, will assist our need." 210

He spake; and all approved the words he said.
Then poured the heralds water on the hands
Of those who sat. The young men crowned with wine
The goblets, and in seemly order passed
The brimming cups, distributing to each. 215
Part to the gods they poured, and next they drank
As each might choose, and then the embassy
Hastened from Agamemnon's tent. To each
Gerenian Nestor spake in turn, and fixed
His eyes on each intently,—most of all 220
Upon Ulysses,—and with many a charge
To turn Pelides from his angry mood.
Along the edge of the resounding deep
They went, and as they walked they offered prayer
To earth-embracing Neptune, that their words 225
Might move the great soul of Æacides.
And now they came where lay the Myrmidons
Among their tents and ships. Achilles there
Drew solace from the music of a harp
Sweet-toned and shapely, in a silver frame, 230
Part of the spoil he took when he o'erthrew
Eëtion's town. To soothe his mood he sang
The deeds of heroes. By him sat alone
Patroclus, silent till the song should cease.

On moved the messengers,—before them walked 235
High-born Ulysses,—till they stood beside
Achilles. He beheld, and with the harp
Sprang from his seat, surprised. Patroclus saw
The heroes also, and arose. Their hands
The swift Achilles took in his, and said:— 240

“Welcome! Ye come as friends. Some pressing cause
Must surely bring you hither, whom I prize,
Wronged as I am, beyond all other Greeks.”

Thus speaking, the great son of Peleus led
His guests still farther on, and seated them 245
On couches spread with purple coverings,
And thus addressed Patroclus, who was near:—

“Son of Menœtius, bring a larger vase,
And mingle purer wine, and place a cup
For each, since these are most beloved friends,— 250
These warriors who now sit beneath my roof.”

He spake. Patroclus hearkened, and obeyed
His well-beloved friend, who meantime placed
A block beside the fire, and on it laid
Chines of a sheep and of a fatling goat, 255
And of a sow, the fattest of her kind.
Automedon stood by and held them fast;
Achilles took the knife and skilfully

Carved them in portions, and transfix'd the parts
With spits. Patroclus, the divine in form, 260
Woke to a blaze the fire; and when the flame
Had ceased to rise he raked the glowing coals
Apart, and o'er them stretch'd the spits, and strew'd,
Raising the flesh, the sacred salt o'er all.
And when he had made ready and had spread 265
The banquet on the board, Patroclus took
The bread and offer'd it to all the guests
In shapely canisters. Achilles served
The meats, and took his seat against the wall,
In front of great Ulysses. There he bade 270
His friend Patroclus offer sacrifice,
Casting the first rich morsels to the flames.
The guests put forth their hands and shared the feast;
And when the calls of hunger and of thirst
Were felt no longer, Ajax gave a nod 275
To Phœnix, which divine Ulysses saw,
And fill'd his cup and drank to Peleus' son:—
“Thy health, Achilles! Princely feasts like this
Attend us both in Agamemnon's tent
And here,—for here is all that makes a feast 280
Complete; yet now is not the time to think
Of pleasant banquets, for our thoughts are turn'd—

O Jove-born warrior!—to a fearful time
Of slaughter, and the fate of our good ships,—
Whether we save them harmless, or the foe 285
Destroy them, if thou put not on thy might.
For now the haughty Trojans, and the troops
Who come from far to aid them, pitch their camp
Close to our fleet and wall, and all around
Kindle their many fires, and boast that we 290
No longer have the power to drive them back
From our black galleys. Jupiter, the son
Of Saturn, shows them favorable signs
With lightnings from above; and, terrible
In aspect and in valor, Hector makes 295
Sad havoc, trusting in the aid of Jove,
And neither reverences gods nor men,—
Such rage possesses him. He prays that soon
The morn may rise, that he may hew the prows
From all our ships and give them to the flames, 300
And slay the Greeks, bewildered with the smoke.
For me, I greatly fear the gods will grant
That he fulfil his threat, and that our doom
Will be to perish on the Trojan coast,
And far away from Argos famed for steeds. 305
Rise, then, though late,—rise with a resolute mind,

And from the hard-pressed sons of Greece drive back
The assailing Trojans. Thou wilt else lament
Hereafter, when the evil shall be done
And shall admit no cure. Bethink thee well
How from the Greeks thou may'st avert the day
Of their destruction. O my friend, when first
He sent thee forth to Agamemnon's help
From Phthia's coast, thy father Peleus said: —

310

“‘My child, from Juno and Minerva comes
The gift of valor, if they choose to give.
But curb thou the high spirit in thy breast,
For gentle ways are best, and keep aloof
From sharp contentions, that the old and young
Among the Greeks may honor thee the more.’

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“Such was the old man's charge, forgotten now.
Yield, then, and lay thy wrath aside. Large gifts
Doth Agamemnon offer, to appease
Thy wounded spirit. Hear me, if thou wilt,
Recount what gifts the monarch in his tent
Hath promised thee: — Seven tripods which the fire
Hath never touched; six talents of pure gold;
And twenty shining caldrons; and twelve steeds
Of hardy frame, victorious in the race,
Whose feet have won him prizes in the games.

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No beggar would he be, nor yet with store
Of gold unfurnished, in whose coffers lay
The prizes those swift-footed steeds have won.
Seven faultless women, skilled in household arts,
He offers, — Lesbians, whom he chose when thou 335
Didst overrun the populous Lesbian isle, —
In beauty eminent among their sex.
These he bestows, and with them he will send
Her whom he took away, — Briseis, pure —
He swears it with a mighty oath — as pure 340
As when she left thy tent. All these he gives
At once; and if, by favor of the gods,
We lay the mighty city of Priam waste,
Thou shalt load down thy galley with large store
Of gold and silver, entering first when we, 345
The Greeks, divide the spoil. Then may'st thou choose
Twice ten young Trojan women, beautiful
Beyond their sex save Helen. If we come
Safe to Achaian Argos, richly stocked
With milky kine, thou may'st become to him 350
A son-in-law, and cherished equally
With his sole son Orestes, who is reared
Right royally. Three daughters there, within
The monarch's stately halls, — Chrysothemis,

Laodice, and Iphianassa,—dwell, 355
And thou may'st choose among them, and may'st lead
Home to the house of Peleus her who best
Deserves thy love. Nor needest thou endow
The bride, for he will give an ampler dower
Than ever father to his daughter gave,— 360
Seven cities with thronged streets,— Cardamyle,
Enope, grassy Hira, Pheræ famed
Afar, Antheia with rich pasture-grounds,
Æpeia beautiful, and Pedasus
With all its vineyards; all are near the sea, 365
And stand the last before you reach the coast
Of sandy Pylos. Rich in flocks and herds
Their dwellers are, and they will honor thee
As if thou wert a god, and, ruled by thee,
Will pay large tribute. These will he bestow, 370
Let but thine anger cease. But if the son
Of Atreus and his gifts still move thy hate,
At least have pity on the afflicted Greeks,
Pent in their camp, who now would honor thee
As if thou wert a god; and thou shalt gain 375
Great glory as their champion, and shalt slay
This Hector, who even now is close at hand,
And in a murderous frenzy makes his boast

That none of all the chieftains whom the fleet
Of Greece brought hither equals him in might." 380

The swift Achilles answered him and said:—

"Son of Laertes, nobly-born, and versed
In wise devices, let me frankly speak
Just as I think, and just as I shall act,
And then ye will not importune me more.
Hateful to me, as are the gates of hell, 385
Is he who, hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another. I shall speak as seems
To me the best; nor deem I that the son
Of Atreus or the other Greeks can move
My settled purpose, since no thanks are paid 390
To him who with the enemy maintains
A constant battle: equal is the meed
Of him who stands aloof and him who fights
Manfully; both the coward and the brave
Are held in equal honor, and they die 395
An equal death,—the idler and the man
Of mighty deeds. For me there is no store
Of wealth laid up from all that I have borne,
Exposing life in battle. As a bird
Brings to her unfledged young the food she finds, 400
Though she herself be fasting, so have I

Had many a night unvisited by sleep,
And passed in combat many a bloody day,
Fighting beside these warriors for their wives.
Twelve cities have I with my fleet laid waste, 405
And with my Myrmidons have I o'erthrown
Eleven upon this fertile Trojan coast.
Full many a precious spoil from these I bore,
And to Atrides Agamemnon gave.
He, loitering in his fleet, received them all; 410
Few he distributed, and many kept.
To chiefs and princes he indeed assigned
Prizes, which now they hold. From me alone
Of all the Greeks he takes my prize; he takes
My bride, whom well I loved;—and let him keep 415
The damsel. But what need is there that Greeks
Wage war against the Trojans? For what cause
Did Agamemnon, gathering from our realms
An army, lead it hither? Was it not
Because of fair-haired Helen? Are the sons 420
Of Atreus, then, the only men on earth
Who love their wives? Nay, every good man loves
And cherishes his spouse; and mine I loved
Tenderly, though the captive of my spear:
And now, since he hath taken my reward 425
Away and treacherously dealt with me,

Let him not try again, for I am warned,
And he will not persuade me. Let him take
Counsel with thee, Ulysses, and the rest,
How to drive back the enemy and save 430
The fleet from flames. Already has he done
Much without me; a rampart he has raised,
And round it dug a deep, broad trench, and filled
The trench with palisades. Yet can he not
Resist the man-destroyer Hector thus. 435
This Hector, when I fought among the Greeks,
Never would fight at distance from the walls,
And ventured not beyond the Scæan gates
And beechen tree. There waited he for me
Upon a time, and scarce escaped with life 440
From my assault. Now, since I do not choose
To fight with noble Hector, I shall pay,
To-morrow, sacrifice to Jupiter
And all the gods, and load my galleys well,
And draw them to the water. Then shalt thou 445
See—if thou care for such a sight—my ships
Sailing upon the fishy Hellespont
At early morning, with their crews on board
Eager to pull the oar; and if the god
Of ocean grant a prosperous voyage, then 450

On the third day we reach the fertile coast
Of Phthia. Large possessions left I there
When I came hither in an evil hour;
And thither I shall carry with me gold
And ruddy brass, and women of fair forms, 455
And burnished steel,—the spoils I won in war.
The prize he gave me, Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus, takes, with many insults, back.
Bear him this message,—give it openly,
That others of the Greeks may be like me 460
Indignant should he impudently dare
To wrong them also:—Let him ne'er again,
Though shameless, dare to look me in the face.
I will not join in council or in act
With him: he has deceived and wronged me once, 465
And now he cannot wheedle me with words.
Let once suffice. I leave him to himself,
To perish. All-providing Jupiter
Hath made him mad. I hate his gifts; I hold
In utter scorn the giver. Were his gifts 470
Tenfold — nay, twenty-fold — the worth of all
That he possesses, and with added wealth
From others,—all the riches that flow in
Upon Orchomenus, or Thebes, the pride

Of Egypt, where large treasures are laid up, 475
And through whose hundred gates rush men and steeds,
Two hundred through each gate; — nay, should he give
As many gifts as there are sands and dust
Of earth, — not even then shall Atreus' son
Persuade me, till I reap a just revenge 480
For his foul contumelies. I will wed
No child of Agamemnon. Even though
She vied with golden Venus in her charms,
And with the blue-eyed Pallas in her skill,
I would not wed her. Let him choose among 485
The Greeks a fitter husband, — one whose rule
Is wider than my own. For if the gods
Preserve me, and I reach my home again,
My father, Peleus, will bestow on me
A consort. Many are the Achaian maids, 490
Daughters of chiefs who hold our citadels
In Hellas and in Phthia, and of these,
Her who shall most delight me I will make
My well-beloved wife. My soul has longed
Earnestly, with a fitting spouse betrothed 495
Duly, to make my dwelling there, and there
Enjoy the wealth which aged Peleus won;
For not to be compared with life is all

The wealth which, as men say, was treasured up
In Ilium's populous town in time of peace, 500
Ere the Greeks came, nor all the stores contained
Within the stony threshold of the god
Who bears the bow, Apollo, on the coast
Of rocky Pytho. We may gather spoil
Of oxen and of fatling sheep, and bring 505
Tripods from war, and yellow-maned steeds:
The breath of man no force can seize or hold,
And when it leaves the enclosure of the teeth
It comes not back. My mother said to me—
The goddess, silver-footed Thetis, said— 510
A twofold fate conducts me to my death;—
If I remain to fight beneath the walls
Of Ilium, my return will be cut off,
But deathless my renown; if I return
To the dear land in which my fathers dwell, 515
My glory will be nought, but long my life,
And late will come to me the stroke of death.
And now I counsel all to sail for home,
For never will ye see the overthrow
Of lofty Ilium. Jove the Thunderer 520
Stretches his great hand o'er her, and her sons
Take courage. Go ye now, and take with you

This message to the princes of the Greeks,—
As is the office of an embassy,—
And bid them meditate some wiser plan 535
To save their galleys and the host of Greeks
Within the hollow barks. The plan which brought
You hither cannot serve you while I keep
My anger unappeased. Let Phœnix stay
To pass the night with us, that he may sail 540
To-morrow, if it please him, to the land
We love; I take him not against his will.”

He ceased; and silent were the ambassadors,
Astonished at his passionate words. At last
Phœnix, the aged knight, with many tears 535
And sighs, took up the word, in grief and fear
Lest Hector should destroy the Grecian fleet:—

“Illustrious son of Peleus, if indeed
Thou wilt return, nor carest to repel
From our swift galleys the consuming fire, 540
Because thou art offended, how shall I,
Dear child, remain without thee? When at first
Peleus, the aged knight, from Phthia sent
Thee, yet a boy, to Agamemnon’s aid,
Unskilled as then thou wert in cruel war, 545
And martial councils,—where men also gain

A great renown,— he sent me with thee, charged
To teach thee both, that so thou might'st become
In words an orator, in warlike deeds
An actor. Therefore, my beloved child, 550
Not willingly shall I remain behind;
Not even though a god should promise me
That, overcoming the decays of age,
I might become a beardless youth again,
As when from Hellas and its companies 555
Of lovely maids I came a fugitive,
And left Amyntor, son of Ormenus,—
My father,— angry with me for the sake
Of a fair-tressèd wanton, whom he loved,
Treating my mother basely. To my knees 560
My mother came and prayed me ceaselessly,
First, to possess the woman, that she then
Might loathe the elder one; and I obeyed.
My father knew it, and with many a curse
Invoked the hateful furies to forbid 565
That any child who owed his birth to me
Should ever sit upon his knees. The gods—
The Jove of Hades and dread Proserpine—
Confirmed his curse. I could not brook to dwell
Within my father's palace while he thus 570

Was wroth with me. My kindred and my friends
Came round me, and besought me to remain,
And stayed beside me. Many a fatling ewe
And many a slow-paced ox with curving horns
They slew, and many a fattened swine they stretched 575
Over the flame of Vulcan. From the casks
Of the old chief his wine was freely drawn.
Nine nights they slept surrounding me, while each
Kept watch in turn: nor ever were the fires
Put out; one blazed beneath the portico 580
Of the fair hall, and near the chamber-door
Another glimmered in the vestibule.
But when upon me rose the tenth dark night,
I broke my aptly-jointed chamber-doors,
And issued forth, and easily o'erleaped 585
The wall around the palace, quite unseen
Of watching men and of the serving maids.
I fled through spacious Hellas to the fields
Of Phthia, nurse of flocks, and to her king,
Peleus, who kindly welcomed me, and loved 590
Me as a father loves his only son,
Born to large wealth in his declining years.
He made me rich, and gave me sovereign rule
Over much people. My abode was fixed

In farthest Phthia, where I was the prince 595
Of the Dolopians. As for thee, my care,
Godlike Achilles, made thee what thou art.
I loved thee from my soul: thou wouldst not go
With any other to the feast, nor take
Thy food at home until upon my knees 600
I placed thee, carved thy meats, and gave them thee,
And poured thy wine. The tunic on my breast
Was often wetted by thee when the wine
Gushed in thy petulant childhood from thy lips.
Thus many things did I endure for thee, 605
And many toils perform; and since the gods
Vouchsafed no son to me, it was my thought
To train thee as a son, that thou might'st be,
O godlike man! the bulwark of my age.
And now subdue that mighty spirit of thine: 610
Ill it becomes thee to be merciless:
The gods themselves are placable, though far
Above us all in honor and in power
And virtue. We propitiate them with vows,
Incense, libations, and burnt-offerings, 615
And prayers for those who have offended. Prayers
Are daughters of almighty Jupiter, —
Lame, wrinkled, and squint-eyed, — that painfully

Follow Misfortune's steps; but strong of limb
And swift of foot Misfortune is, and, far 620
Outstripping all, comes first to every land,
And there wreaks evil on mankind, which prayers
Do afterwards redress. Whoe'er receives
Jove's daughters reverently when they approach,
Him willingly they aid, and to his suit 625
They listen. Whosoever puts them by
With obstinate denial, they appeal
To Jove, the son of Saturn, and entreat
That he will cause Misfortune to attend
The offender's way in life, that he in turn 630
May suffer evil and be punished thus.
Wherefore, Achilles! do thou also yield
The honor due Jove's daughters, freely given
By other valiant men. If Atreus' son
Brought thee no gifts, nor promised others still, 635
But kept his anger, I would never ask
That thou shouldst lay aside thy wrath and come
To help the Argives in their bitter need.
But he bestows large gifts, and adds a pledge
Of others yet in store, and he hath sent 640
The best men of the army, who to thee
Are dearest, to entreat thee. Spurn thou not

These, nor their embassy, although at first
Thine anger was not causeless. We have heard
The praise of heroes of the elder time, 645
Inflamed to vehement anger, yet appeased
By gifts, and yielding to persuasive words.
One instance I remember: long ago
It happened, and I will relate it here
Among my friends. Around the city-walls 650
Of Calydon did the Curetes strive
In battle with the Ætolians; they destroyed
Each other fearfully. The Ætolians fought
To save the pleasant town of Calydon,
And the Curetes warred to lay it waste. 655
Diana of the golden throne had caused
The war, displeased with CENEUS, who withheld
From her the first-fruits of his fertile field:
While hecatombs were burnt in sacrifice
To feast the other gods, to her alone— 660
Daughter of Jove—no offering was brought;
For either he forgot, or thought the rite
Of little moment; but he greatly erred.
And now the child of Jove, the archer-queen,
Incensed, sent forth against him from the wood 665
A white-tusked wild boar, which upon his lands

Entered, and ravaged them, and brought to earth

Many tall trees: tree after tree they fell,

With roots upturned, and all the blossoms on,

That promised fruit. Him Meleager, son

670

Of CENEUS, slew, with many hunters called

From neighboring cities, bringing many hounds.

A few could not subdue him: he had made

Many already mount the funeral pile.

Diana kindled round the boar a strife

675

For the beast's head and bristly hide,—a war

'Twixt the Curetes and the Ætolian band

Of braves. The war, while Meleager fought,

Went not with the Curetes, nor could they,

Though many, keep the field. But wrath at last

680

Seized Meleager,—wrath, which rages oft

Even in prudent minds. Incensed against

Althæa, his own mother, he remained

At home with Cleopatra, his young wife,

The beauteous, whom a delicate-footed dame,

685

Marpessa, daughter of Evenus, bore

To Idas, bravest in his time among

The sons of men,—so brave that once he drew

A bow against Apollo for the sake

Of his neat-footed bride. The honored pair

690

Within the palace used to call their child
Alcyone; for when the archer-god,
Apollo, from her husband bore away
The mother, Cleopatra sadly wailed,
As wails the halcyon. So beside his spouse 695
Dwelt Meleager, brooding ever o'er
The violent anger which his mother's curse
Had kindled. Grieving for a brother's death,
She supplicated heaven, and often struck
Her hands against the teeming earth, and called — 700
Kneeling, her bosom all bedewed with tears —
On Pluto and the cruel Proserpine,
To put her son to death. From Erebus
The pitiless Erinnyes, wandering
In darkness, heard the prayer. Then straightway rose 705
A sound of fearful tumult at the gates:
The towers were battered, and the elder chiefs
Of the Ætolians hastened to entreat
The aid of Meleager, and they sent
Priests of the gods, a chosen band, to pray 710
That he would come to their defence. Large gifts
They promised. Where the soil of Calydon
Was best, they bade him choose a fruitful field
Of fifty acres, half for vines, and half,

Cleared of the trees, for tillage. Earnestly 715
Did aged Æneus, famed for horsemanship,
Beseech him; to the chamber of his son,
High-roofed, he climbed, and at the threshold shook
The massive doors with knocking as he sued.
His sisters and his reverend mother joined 720
Their supplications: he resisted still.
And much his friends, the dearest and most prized,
Besought him, but they vainly strove to swerve
His steadfast mind, till his own chamber felt
The assault, and the Curetes climbed the walls 725
To fire the populous city. Then the nymph,
His graceful wife, entreated him with tears,
And spake of all the horrors which o'ertake
A captured city,—all the men cut off
By massacre, the houses given to flames, 730
The children and deep-bosomed women dragged
Into captivity. Her sorrowful words
He heard; his spirit was disturbed; he went
To gird his glittering armor on, and thus
He saved the Ætolians from a fearful doom, 735
Obeying his own impulse. The reward
Of rare and costly gifts they gave him not,
Though thus he rescued them. Be not thy thought

Like his, my friend; let no invisible power
Persuade thee thus to act. Far worse it were, 740
To wait, and when our fleet is all on fire
Offer thy aid. Accept the gifts at once:
Then will the Greeks, as if thou wert a god,
Hold thee in honor. If without the gifts
Thou enter later on the field of fight, 745
Thou wilt not have like honor with the host,
Although thou turn the assault of battle back."

Then did Achilles, swift of foot, reply:—
"O ancient Phœnix, father, loved of Jove,
Such honor need I not; for the decree 750
Of Jove, I deem, already honors me,
And will detain me by my beakèd ships
While breath is in my lungs, and I have power
To move these knees. Yet one thing I would say,—
And bear it thou in mind,—vex not my soul 755
With weeping and lamenting for the sake
Of Agamemnon; it becomes thee not—
Thou who art loved by me—to yield thy love
To him, unless thou wouldst incur my hate.
And thou shouldst be the enemy of him 760
Who wrongs me. Reign thou equally with me,
And share my honors. These will carry back

My answer. Thou remain, and, softly couched,
Sleep here: with early morn will we consult
Whether to leave this region or remain." 765

He spake, and, nodding to Patroclus, gave
A signal to prepare an ample couch
For Phœnix, while the other chiefs prepared
To leave the tent. Then Ajax Telamon,
The godlike chief, addressed his comrades thus:— 770

“Son of Laertes, nobly born, and skilled
In sage devices, let us now depart,
Since, as it seems, the end for which we came
Cannot be compassed thus, and we must bear
With speed the unwelcome answer to the Greeks, 775
Who sit expecting us; while in his breast
The implacable Achilles bears a fierce
And haughty heart, nor doth he heed the claim
Of that close friendship of his fellow-chiefs,
Which at the Grecian fleet exalted him 780
Above all others. Unrelenting one!
Even for a brother’s death a price is paid,
Or when a son is slain: the slayer dwells
At home among his people, having made
The appointed expiation. He to whom 785
The fine is offered takes it, and his thirst

Of vengeance is appeased. But in thy heart
The gods have kindled an unquenchable rage,
All for a single damsel,—and behold,
Seven more we offer, passing beautiful,
With many gifts beside. Let, then, thy mood
Be softened: have respect to thine own roof;
For we are guests beneath it, sent from all
The assembled host, and strong is our desire
To be thy dearest and most cherished friends
Of all the Achaians, many as they are.”

790

795

Achilles the swift-footed answered thus:—
“Illustrious Ajax, son of Telamon,
Prince of the people! all that thou hast said,
I well perceive, is prompted by thy heart.
Mine swells with indignation when I think
How King Atrides mid the assembled Greeks
Heaped insults on me, as if I had been
A wretched vagabond. But go ye now
And bear my message. I shall never think
Of bloody war till noble Hector, son
Of Priam, slaughtering in his way the Greeks,
Shall reach the galleys of the Myrmidons,
To lay the fleet in flames. But when he comes
To my own tent and galley, he, I think,
Though eager for the combat, will desist.”

800

805

810

He spake. Each raised a double cup and poured
Libations to the gods; they then returned
Beside the fleet. Ulysses led the way.

Patroclus bade the attendant men and maids 815
Strew with all speed a soft and ample bed
For Phœnix. They obeyed, and spread the couch
With skins of sheep, dyed coverlets, and sheets
Of lawn; and there the old man lay to wait
The glorious morn. Meantime Achilles slept 820
Within the tent's recess, and by him lay
Phorbas's daughter, whom he carried off
From Lesbos, — Diomedé, rosy-cheeked.
Upon the other side Patroclus lay,
With slender-waisted Iphis by his side, 825
Given by the great Achilles when he took
Scyros the tall, where Enyëus ruled.

Now when the ambassadors were come within
The tent of Agamemnon, all the chiefs
Rose, one by one, and, lifting up to them 83
Their golden goblets, asked the news they brought;
And first Atrides, king of men, inquired: —

“Renowned Ulysses, glory of the Greeks!
Tell me, will he protect our fleet from flames,
Or does he, in his wrath and pride, refuse?” 835

Then spake the hardy chief Ulysses thus:—
 “Atrides Agamemnon, glorious king
 Of men! he will not let his wrath abate,
 But rages yet more fiercely, and contemns
 Thee and thy gifts. He leaves thee to consult 840
 With thine Achaians by what means to save
 The fleet and army; for himself he means
 To-morrow, with the early dawn, to launch
 His well-appointed galleys on the sea,
 And will advise the other Greeks to spread 845
 The sails for home, since they will never see
 The overthrow of lofty Troy, for Jove
 The Thunderer stretches his protecting hand
 Above her, and her sons have taken heart.
 Such are his words; and those who went with me 850
 Are present,—Ajax and the heralds both,
 Sage men,—the witnesses to what I say.
 The aged Phœnix stays behind to sleep,
 And on the morrow to attend his chief
 To their beloved country,—if he will, 855
 For else by no means will he take him hence.”

He spake; and all were silent, all amazed
 At what they heard, for these were bitter words.
 Long sat the sons of Greece in silent thought,
 Till Diomed, the great in battle, spake:— 860

“Atrides Agamemnon, glorious king
Of men! I would thou hadst not deigned to ask
The illustrious son of Peleus for his aid,
With offer of large gifts; for arrogant
He is at all times: thou hast made him now 865
More insolent. Now leave him to himself,
To go or to remain: he yet will fight
When his mood changes, or some god within
Shall move him. Let us do what I advise:—
Betake we all ourselves to rest, but first 870
Refresh ourselves with food and wine; in them
Is strength and spirit. When the rosy morn
Shall shine, command thou that the foot and horse
Be speedily drawn up before the fleet,
And thou encourage them with cheerful words, 875
And fight among them in the foremost rank.”

He spake. The kings assented, and admired
The words of the horse-tamer Diomed;
And, pouring out libations, to their tents
They all departed, and lay down to rest, 880
And took into their souls the balm of sleep.

BOOK X.

ALL the night long the captains of the Greeks
Slept at the ships, and pleasant was their sleep,—
Save only Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
The shepherd of the people. Not to him—
Vexed with a thousand cares—came gentle sleep. 5
As when the husband of the light-haired queen
Of heaven sends forth his thunders, ushering in
Some wide-involving shower,—rain, hail, or snow
Whitening the fields,—or opening o'er some land
The ravenous jaws of unrelenting war,— 10
So frequent were the groans which from his heart
Atrides uttered; for within his breast
His heart was troubled. Looking toward the plain
Of Troy, he wondered at the many fires
Blazing before the city, and the sound 15
Of flutes and fifes, and tumult of the crowd.
But when he turned him toward the fleet and host
Of Greece, he tore his hair, and flung it up

To Jove, and vented his great heart in groans.
And now at length it seemed to him most wise 20
To seek Neleian Nestor, and with him
Devise some plan by which to turn aside
The threatened evil from the Greeks. He rose,
And drew his tunic o'er his breast, and laced
The graceful sandals to his well-shaped feet; 25
And o'er his shoulders threw the blood-stained hide
Of a huge tawny lion, that reached down
Even to the ground; and took in hand his spear.
Meantime with like uneasy thoughts oppressed
Was Menelaus, to whose eyes there came 30
No slumber,—dreading lest calamity
Should light upon the Greeks, who for his sake
Had crossed the sea to carry war to Troy.
And first he threw a leopard's spotted hide
O'er his broad back, and placed the brazen helm 35
Upon his head, and took in his strong grasp
A spear, and went to bid his brother wake, —
His brother, the chief ruler over all
The men of Greece, and honored like a god.
He found him at his galley's prow in act 40
To sheath his shoulders in the shining mail,
And pleased to greet his coming. To the king
Thus Menelaus, great in battle, spake:—

“Why arm thyself, my brother? Wouldst thou send
A warrior to explore the Trojan camp? 45
None will accept the task, I fear, to creep
Alone at dead of night, a spy, within
The hostile lines;—a bold man must he be.”

Then answered Agamemnon, king of men:—
“Most noble Menelaus, much we need 50
Wise counsel—thou and I—to save our men
And galleys from destruction, since the will
Of Jove is changed. Now hath the God respect
To Hector’s sacrifices; for in truth
I never saw—I never heard of one 55
Who in one day performed such mighty deeds
As Hector, dear to Jove, just now hath wrought,
Though not the son of goddess or of god.
Those deeds will be, I deem, for many a day
A cause of bitter sorrow to the Greeks,— 60
Such evil hath he wrought. Now go at once,
And from their galleys call Idomeneus
And Ajax; while to noble Nestor’s tent
I go, and pray that he will rise and give
Their orders to the sacred band of guards;— 65
For they will hearken to him, since his son
Commands them jointly with Meriones,

The armor-bearer of Idomeneus,—
Both named by us to that important trust.”

Then Menelaus, great in battle, said:— 70
“What wilt thou, then, and what dost thou command,—
That I remain with them until thou come,
Or, having given the message, seek thee here?”

Again the monarch Agamemnon spake:—
“Wait there, lest as we go I meet thee not, 75
For many ways are through the camp. But thou,
In going, shout aloud and bid them all
Be vigilant, accosting every one
By his paternal name, and giving each
Due honor: bear thyself not haughtily: 80
We too must labor; for when we were born
Jove laid this hard condition on us all.”

So spake he, and, dismissing with that charge
His brother, hastened to where Nestor lay,
The shepherd of his people. Him he found 85
On his soft couch within his tent beside
His dark-brown ship. Around him scattered shone
His arms,—a shield, two spears, a gleaming helm,
And pliant belt, with which the ancient man
Girded himself when arming to lead on 90
His men to murderous fight;—for not to age

The warrior yielded yet. He raised his head,
And, leaning on his elbow, questioned thus
Atrides: "Who art thou that traversest
The camp beside the fleet at dead of night, 95
Alone, while others sleep? Com'st thou to find
One of the guardsmen, or a comrade? Speak;
Come not in silence thus: what wouldst thou have?"

Then answered Agamemnon, king of men:—
"O Nestor, son of Neleus, whom the Greeks 100
All glory in! thou certainly wilt know
Atrides Agamemnon, whom the will
Of Jove hath visited with hardships great
Beyond what others bear, to last while breath
Is in my lungs, and while my knees can move. 105
I wander thus abroad because sweet sleep
Comes not to close my eyelids, and the war
And slaughter of the Greeks distress me sore.
For them I greatly fear, my heart is faint,
My mind confounded. In my breast the heart 110
Pants, and my limbs all tremble. If thou wilt,—
For, as I see, thou also dost not sleep,—
Come with me to the guards, that we may know
Whether, o'ercome by toil and weariness,
They give themselves to slumber and forget 115

Their watch. The foe is near us in his camp,
And how know we that even now by night
He plans not, to attack us in our tents?"

Then Nestor, the Gerenian knight, replied:—

"Atrides Agamemnon, glorious king 120
Of men, almighty Jove will not perform
For Hector all that Hector plans and hopes;
And heavier cares, I think, will yet be his
When once Achilles' wrath is turned away.
Yet willingly I join thee. Let us call 125
The other chiefs,—Ulysses, Diomed,
Both mighty spearmen; Ajax, swift of foot;
And the brave son of Phyleus. It were well
To send and bid the mightier Ajax come,
And King Idomeneus, for farthest off 130
The ships of both are stationed. I shall chide
Thy brother Menelaus—though he be
Honored and dear, and though it please thee not—
For sleeping, while he leaves such toils as these
To thee alone. He should be here among 135
The chiefs, exhorting them to valiant deeds;
For now the hour of bitter need is come."

Again spake Agamemnon, king of men:—

"At other times, old chief, I would have begged

That thou shouldst blame him : he is oft remiss, 140
And late to act ; but not because of sloth,
Or want of spirit, — but he looks to me
And waits for my example. Yet to-night
He rose before me, sought me, and is sent
To call the chiefs whom thou hast named ; and now 145
Let us go on, and meet them where they wait,
Among the guards and just before the gates, —
For I appointed that the trysting-place.”

And Nestor, the Gerenian knight, replied : —
“Then let no Greek condemn him, or refuse 150
To heed and to obey when he shall speak.”

He spake, and drew his tunic o’er his breast,
Laced the fair sandals to his shapely feet,
And round him fastened, with a clasp, his cloak, —
A double web of purple, with full folds 155
And flowing pile. He grasped a massive spear,
Its blade of trenchant brass. And first he sought
The galleys of the Achaians brazen-mailed.
There shouted Nestor the Gerenian knight,
To raise Ulysses, best of counsellors, 160
Jove-like in wisdom ; who perceived the voice,
And issued from his tent in haste, and said : —

“What brings you forth to walk the camp at night,
Beside the ships alone ; what urgent cause ?”

Then answered Nestor the Gerenian knight:— 165

“Son of Laertes, nobly born, and skilled
In wise devices, be thou not displeased:
A fearful woe impends above the Greeks:
Come, then, and call the other chiefs, to give
Their counsel whether we shall flee or fight.” 170

He spake; and wise Ulysses, entering
His tent again, upon his shoulders laid
His well-wrought shield, and joined them as they went,
Till, coming to Tydides Diomed,
They found him by his tent among his arms, 175
His comrades sleeping round him with their shields
Beneath their heads. Their spears were set upright,
The nether points in earth. The polished brass
Gleamed like the lightnings of All-Father Jove.
In sleep the hero lay; a wild bull’s hide 180
Was spread beneath him, and a carpet dyed
With glowing colors propped his head. The knight,
Gerenian Nestor, touched him with his foot
And roused him, and addressed him chidingly:—

“O son of Tydeus! wilt thou calmly sleep 185
All the night long? And hast thou, then, not heard
That on a height amidst the plain the sons
Of Troy are stationed, near the ships, and small
The space that parts the enemy’s camp from ours?”

He spake. The son of Tydeus sprang from sleep 190
At once, and answered him with wingèd words:—

“Thy labors are too constant, aged man;
Thou shrinkest from no hardship. Are there not
Young men among the Greeks to walk the camp
And call the kings? Thou never takest rest.” 195

And Nestor, the Gerenian knight, replied:—
“Well hast thou said, my friend, for I have sons
Without reproach, and I have many troops;
And any one of these might walk the camp
And give the summons. But to-night there lies 200
A hard necessity upon the Greeks,
And their destruction and their rescue hang
Balanced on a knife’s edge. Come then, since thou
Art younger, call swift Ajax and the son
Of Phyleus, if thou wouldst relieve my age.” 205

He spake; and Diomed around him flung
A tawny lion’s ample hide, that reached
Down to his feet, and took his spear and went
And summoned the two kings, and brought them forth.

Now when they came among the assembled guard, 210
Its leaders were not slumbering; every man
Sat watchful and in arms. As dogs that guard
Flocks in a sheepfold hear some savage beast

That comes through thickets down the mountain-side;
Loud is the clamor of the dogs and men, 215
And sleep is frightened thence,—so gentle sleep
Fled from the eyes of those who watched, that night,
Sadly, with eyes turned ever toward the plain,
Intently listening for the foe's approach.
The aged Nestor saw them, and rejoiced, 220
And thus encouraged them with wingèd words:—

“Watch thus, dear youths, let no one yield to sleep,
Lest we become the mockery of the foe.”

He spake, and crossed the trench; and with him went
The Grecian leaders, they who had been called 225
To council. With them went Meriones
And Nestor's eminent son, for they had both
Been summoned. Crossing to the other side
Of that deep trench, they found an open space
Clear of the dead, in which they sat them down,— 230
Just where the fiery Hector, having slain
Many Achaians, turned him back when night
Came o'er him. There they sat to hold debate;
And thus spake Nestor the Gerenian knight:—

“Friends! is there none among you who so far 235
Trusts his own valor that he will to-night
Venture among the Trojans? He perchance

Might capture on the borders of the camp
Some foeman wandering, or might bring report
Of what they meditate, and whether still 240
They mean to keep their station far from Troy
And near our ships, or, since their late success,
Return to Ilium. Could he safely bring
This knowledge back to us, his meed were great, —
Glory among all men beneath the sky, 245
And liberal recompense. As many chiefs
As now command our galleys, each would give
A black ewe with a suckling lamb, — such gifts
No one hath yet received, — and he should sit
A guest at all our banquets and our feasts.” 250

He spake; and all were silent for a space.
Then Diomed, the great in battle, said: —
“Nestor, my resolute spirit urges me
To explore the Trojan camp, that lies so near;
Yet, were another warrior by my side, 255
I should go forth with a far surer hope,
And greater were my daring. For when two
Join in the same adventure, one perceives
Before the other how they ought to act;
While one alone, however prompt, resolves 260
More tardily and with a weaker will.”

He spake; and many a chief made suit to share
 The risk with Diomed. The ministers
 . Of Mars, the chieftains Ajax, asked to go;
 Meriones desired it; Nestor's son
 Greatly desired to join the enterprise;
 Atrides Menelaus, skilled to wield
 The spear, desired it; and that hardy chief,
 Ulysses, longed to explore the Trojan camp,
 For full of daring aims was the great soul
 Within his bosom. Agamemnon then,
 The king of men, took up the word and said:—

265

270

“Tydides Diomed, most dear of men,
 Choose from the many chiefs, who ask to bear
 A part with thee, the bravest. Be not moved
 By deference to take the worse and leave
 The abler warrior. Pay no heed to rank,
 Or race, or wide extent of kingly rule.”

275

Thus spake the king; for in his heart he feared
 For fair-haired Menelaus. Diomed,
 The great in battle, then addressed them all:—

280

“Ye bid me choose: how, then, can I o'erlook
 Godlike Ulysses, prudent in resolve,
 And firm in every danger, well beloved
 By Pallas. Give me him, and our return

285

Is sure, though from consuming flames; for he
Is wise to plan beyond all other men."

Ulysses, nobly born and hardy, spake
In turn: "Tydides, praise me not too much,
Nor blame me, for thou speakest to the Greeks, 290
Who know me. Meantime let us haste to go,
For the night wears away, and morn is near.
The stars are high, two thirds of night are past,—
The greater part,—and scarce a third remains."

He spake; and both arrayed themselves for fight. 295
The mighty warrior Thrasymedes gave
The two-edged sword he wore to Diomed,—
Whose own was at the galleys,—and a shield.
The hero then put on his helmet, made
Of tough bull-hide, with neither cone nor crest,— 300
Such as is worn by beardless youths. A bow,
Quiver, and sword Meriones bestowed
Upon Ulysses, placing on his brows
A leathern helmet, firmly laced within
By many a thong, and on the outer side 305
Set thickly with a fussy boar's white teeth,
Which fenced it well and skilfully. A web
Of woollen for the temples lined the work.
This helm Autolycus once bore away

From Eleon, the city where he sacked 310
The stately palace of Amyntor, son
Of Ormenus. The captor gave the prize
To the Cytheran chief, Amphidamas,
Who bore it to Scandeia, and in turn
Bestowed it upon Molus as his guest, 315
And Molus gave it to Meriones,
His son, to wear in battle. Now at last
It crowned Ulysses' temples. When the twain
Were all accoutred in their dreadful arms,
Forward they went, and left the assembled chiefs, 320
While, sent by Pallas forth, upon their right
A heron flew beside their path. The bird
They saw not, for the night was dark, but heard
Its rustling wings. Ulysses at the sound
Rejoiced, and supplicated Pallas thus: — 325

“Hear! daughter of the Ægis-bearer Jove!
Thou who art near me in all dangers, thou
Whose eye is on me wheresoe'er I go,
Befriend me, Pallas, yet again, and grant
That, laden with great glory, we return 330
Safe to the galleys, mighty deeds performed,
And woe inflicted on the Trojan race.”

Next Diomed, the great in battle, prayed:—

“Daughter invincible of Jove, give ear
Also to me. Be with me now, as once 335
Thou didst attend on Tydeus nobly born,
My father, when he bore an embassy
To Thebé from the Achaïans. He beside
The Asopus left the Achaïans mailed in brass,
And bore a friendly message to the sons 340
Of Cadmus, and on his return performed
Full many a mighty deed with aid from thee,
Great goddess! for thou stoodest by his side.
Stand now by me; be thou my shield and guard;
And I, in turn, will offer up to thee 345
A yearling heifer, broad between the horns,
Which never ploughman yet hath tamed to bear
The yoke. Her to thine altar will I bring,
With gilded horns, to be a sacrifice.”

So prayed they. Pallas listened to their prayers; 350
And, having supplicated thus the child
Of Jove Almighty, the two chiefs went on
Like lions through the darkness of the night,
Through slaughter, heaps of corpses, and black blood.

Nor now had Hector suffered the brave sons 355
Of Troy to sleep, but summoned all the chiefs,
Leaders, and princes of the host, and thus
Addressed the assembly with well-ordered words:—

“Who of you all will promise to perform
The task I set him, for a large reward? 360
For ample shall his meed be. I will give
A chariot and two steeds with lofty necks,
Swifter than the swift galleys of the Greeks.
Great glory will be his whoever dares
Approach those ships and bring the knowledge thence 365
Whether the fleet is guarded as before,
Or whether, yielding to our arms, the foe
Is meditating flight, and, through the night
O’ercome with weariness, keeps watch no more.”

He spake; and all were silent for a space. 370
Now there was one, among the Trojan chiefs,
Whose father was Eumedes, of the train
Of reverend heralds. Dolon was his name,
And he was rich in gold and brass, deformed
In face but swift of foot, an only son 375
Among five sisters. He stood forth among
The Trojans, and replied to Hector thus:—

“My daring spirit, Hector, urges me
To visit the swift ships and learn the state
Of the Greek host. But hold thy sceptre forth, 380
And solemnly attest the gods that thou
Wilt give to me the horses, and the car

Engrailed with brass, which bear the illustrious son
Of Peleus. I shall not explore in vain,
Nor balk thy hope of me; for I will pass
Into the camp until I reach the ship
Of Agamemnon, where the chiefs are now
Debating whether they shall fly or fight."

385

He spake; and Hector held the sceptre forth,
And swore: "Be Jupiter the Thunderer,
Husband of Juno, witness, that those steeds
Shall bear no other Trojan than thyself.
That honor I confirm to thee alone."

390

He spake. It was an idle oath, yet gave
New courage to the spy, who instantly
Upon his shoulders hung his crooked bow,
And round him flung a gray wolf's hide, and placed
A casque of otter-skin upon his head,
And took his pointed javelin, and made haste
To reach the Grecian fleet. Yet was he doomed
Never to leave that fleet again, nor bring
Tidings to Hector. Soon was he beyond
The crowd of men and steeds, and eagerly
Held on his way. Ulysses first perceived
His coming, and thus spake to Diomed:—

395

400

405

"Some one, Tydides, from the enemy's camp

Is coming, either as a spy, or else
To spoil the dead. First let us suffer him
To pass us by a little on the plain,
Then let us rush and seize him. Should his speed 410
Be greater than our own, let us attack
The fugitive with spears, and drive him on
To where our ships are lying, from his camp,
Lest, flying townward, he 'escape our hands."

He spake; and both lay down without the path, 415
Among the dead, while he unwarily
Passed by them. When he now had gone as far
As two yoked mules might at the furrow's end
Precede a pair of oxen,—for by mules
The plough is drawn more quickly through the soil 420
Of the deep fallow,—then they rose, and rushed
To seize him. As he heard their steps he stopped,
In hope that his companions had been sent
From Troy by Hector to conduct him back.
But when they came within a javelin's cast, 425
Or haply less, he saw that they were foes,
And moved his nimble knees, and turned to flee,
While rapidly they followed. As two hounds,
Sharp-toothed, and trained to track their prey, pursue
Through forest-grounds some fawn or hare that runs 430

Before them panting, so did Diomed
And terrible Ulysses without stop
Follow the fugitive, to cut him off
From his own people. In his flight he came
Where soon he would have mingled with the guards, 435
Close to the fleet. Then Pallas breathed new strength
Into Tydides, that no other Greek
Might boast that he had wounded Dolon first,
And steal the honor. Therefore, with his spear
Uplifted, Diomed rushed on and spake: — 440

“Stop, or my spear o’ertakes thee, nor wilt thou
Escape a certain death from this right hand.”

He spake, and hurled his spear—but not to smite—
At Dolon, over whose right shoulder passed
The polished weapon, and, descending, pierced 445
The ground. Then Dolon, pale and fear-struck, stopped,
And quaked, with chattering teeth and stammering speech.
They, breathless with the chase, came up and seized
His hands, while, bursting into tears, he spake: —

“Take me alive, and ye shall have from me 450
A ransom: there is store of brass and gold
And well-wrought steel, of which a princely share
My father will bestow when he shall hear
Of me alive and at the Grecian fleet.”

The crafty chief Ulysses answered thus:— 455
“Take heart, and cease to think of death, but tell,
And truly, why thou camest to our fleet:
Was it to strip the bodies of the dead?
Camest thou, sent by Hector, as a spy
Among our ships, or of thine own accord?” 460

And Dolon answered, trembling still with fear:—
“Hector, against my will and to my hurt,
Persuaded me. He promised to bestow
On me the firm-paced coursers, and the car
Engrailed with brass, which bear the illustrious son 465
Of Peleus, and enjoined me by the aid
Of darkness to approach the foe and learn
Whether ye guard your galleys as before,
Or, overcome by us, consult on flight,
And, wearied with the hardships of the day, 470
Have failed to set the accustomed nightly watch.”

The man of craft, Ulysses, smiled, and said:—
“Truly, thy hope was set on princely gifts, —
The steeds of war-renowned Æacides,
Hard to be reined by mortal hands, or driven 475
By any, save by Peleus' son himself,
Whom an immortal mother bore. But come,
Tell me,—and tell the truth,—where hast thou left

Hector, the leader or the host, and where
Are laid his warlike arms; where stand his steeds; 480
Where are the sentinels, and where the tents
Of other chiefs? On what do they consult?
Will they remain beside our galleys here,
Or do they meditate, since, as they say,
The Greeks are beaten, a return to Troy?" 485

Dolon, Eumedes' son, made answer thus:—
"What thou requirest I will truly tell.
Hector is with his counsellors, and now,
Apart from all the bustle, at the tomb
Of Ilus the divine, he plans the war. 490
Sentries, of whom thou speakest, there are none;
No chosen band, O hero! has in charge
To guard the camp. By all their blazing fires,
Constrained by need, the Trojans keep awake,
And each exhorts his fellow to maintain 495
The watch: not so the auxiliar troops who came
From far: they sleep, and since they have no wives
Nor children near, they let the Trojans watch."

Then thus the man of wiles, Ulysses, spake:—
"How sleep they,—mingled with the knights of Troy, 500
Or by themselves? Tell me, that I may know."

Dolon, Eumedes' son, made answer thus:—

“What thou requirest I will truly tell.
On one hand, toward the sea, the bowmen lie
Of Caria and Pæonia, and with them 505
Lelegans, Caucons, and the gallant tribe
Of the Pelasgians. On the other hand,
Toward Thymbra, are the Lycians, the proud race
Of Mysia, Phrygia’s knights, and cavalry
Of the Mæonians. Why should ye inquire 510
The place of each? If ye design to-night
To penetrate into the Trojan camp,
There are the Thracians, newly come, apart
From all the others; with them is their king,
Rhesus, the son of Eioneus; his steeds 515
Are far the largest and most beautiful
I ever saw,—the snow is not so white,
The wind is not so swift. His chariot shines
With gold and silver, and the coat of mail
In which he came to Troy is all of gold, 520
And gloriously and marvellously bright,
Such as becomes not mortal men to wear,
But the gods only. Now to your swift ships
Lead me; or bind me fast with thongs, and here
Leave me till your return; and ye shall know 525
Whether the words I speak be true or false.”

Then sternly spake the gallant Diomed:—
“Once in our hands a prisoner, do not think,
O Dolon! to escape, though thou hast told
Things that shall profit us. For if we now 530
Release thee thou wilt surely come again
To the Greek fleet, a spy, or openly
To fight against us. If I take thy life,
’Tis certain thou wilt harm the Greeks no more.”

He spake. And as the suppliant took his chin 535
In his large hand, and had begun a prayer,
He smote him with his sword at the mid-neck,
And cut the tendons both; the severed head,
While yet he spake, fell, rolling in the dust.
And then they took his helm of otter-skin, 540
The wolf’s-hide, sounding bow, and massive spear.
The nobly born Ulysses in his hand
Lifted the trophies high, devoting them
To Pallas, deity of spoil, and prayed:—

“Delight thyself, O goddess, in these arms, 545
For thee we first invoke, of all the gods
Upon Olympus. Guide us now to find
The camp and coursers of the sons of Thrace.”

He spake; and, raising them aloft, he hung
The spoils upon a tamarisk, and brake 550

Reeds and the spreading branches of the tree,
To form a mark, that so on their return
They might not, in the darkness, miss the spot.
Then onward, mid strewn arms and pools of blood,
They went, and soon were where the Thracians lay. 555
There slept the warriors, overpowered with toil;
Their glittering arms were near them, fairly ranged
In triple rows, and by each suit of arms
Two coursers. Rhesus slumbered in the midst.
Near him were his fleet horses, which were made 560
Fast to the chariot's border by the reins.

Ulysses saw them first, and, pointing, said:—

“This is the man, O Diomed, and these
The steeds, described by Dolon whom we slew.
Come, then; put forth thy strength of arm, for ill 565
Doth it become thee to stand idle here,
Armed as thou art. Loose thou the steeds; or else
Slay thou the men, and leave the steeds to me.”

He spake. The blue-eyed Pallas straightway gave
Strength to Tydides, who on every side 570
Dealt slaughter. From the smitten by the sword
Rose fearful groans; the ground was red with blood.
As when a ravening lion suddenly
Springs on a helpless flock of goats or sheep,

So fell Tydides on the Thracian band, 575
Till twelve were slain. Whomever Diomed
Approached and smote, the sage Ulysses seized,
And drew him backward by the feet, that thus
The flowing-maned coursers might pass forth
Unhindered, nor, by treading on the dead, 580
Be startled; for they yet were new to war.
Now when the son of Tydeus reached the king,—
The thirteenth of his victims,—him he slew
As he breathed heavily; for on that night
A fearful dream, in shape Cœnides' son, 585
Stood o'er him, sent by Pallas. Carefully
Ulysses meantime loosed the firm-paced steeds,
And, fastening them together, drave them forth,
Urging them with his bow: he had not thought
To take the showy lash that lay in sight 590
On the fair chariot-seat. In going thence
He whistled, as a sign to Diomed,
Who lingered, pondering on his next exploit,—
Whether to seize the chariot where was laid
The embroidered armor, dragging it away; 595
Or, lifting it aloft, to bear it thence;
Or take more Thracian lives. As thus his thoughts
Were busy, Pallas, standing near him, spake:—

“O son of large-souled Tydeus, think betimes
Of thy return to where the galleys lie ; 600
Else may some god arouse the sons of Troy,
And thou be forced to reach the ships by flight.”

She spake. He knew the goddess by her voice,
And leaped upon a steed. Ulysses lashed
The horses with his bow, and on they flew 605
Toward the swift galleys of the Grecian host.

Apollo, bearer of the silver bow,
Kept no vain watch, and, angry when he saw
Minerva at the side of Diomed,
Down to the mighty host of Troy he came, 610
And roused from sleep a Thracian counsellor,—
Hippocoön, a kinsman of the house
Of Rhesus. Leaping from his couch, he saw
The vacant spot where the swift steeds had stood,
And, weltering in their blood, the dying chiefs. 615

He saw, and wept aloud, and called by name
His dear companion. Then a clamor rose,
And boundless tumult, as the Trojans came
All rushing to the spot, and marvelling
At what the daring warriors, who were now 620
Returning to the hollow ships, had done.

And when these warriors now had reached the spot

Where Hector's spy was slain, Ulysses, dear
To Jupiter, reined in the fiery steeds,
And Diomed leaped down and took the spoil 625
Blood-stained, and gave it to Ulysses' hands,
And mounted. Then again they urged the steeds,
Which, not unwilling, flew along the way.
First Nestor heard the approaching sound, and said:—

“Friends, chiefs and princes of the Greeks, my heart—
Truly or falsely—urges me to speak. 631

The trampling of swift steeds is in my ears.
O that Ulysses and the gallant son
Of Tydeus might be bringing at this hour
Firm-footed coursers from the enemy's camp! 635
Yet must I fear that these, our bravest chiefs,
Have met disaster from the Trojan crew.”

While he was speaking yet, the warriors came.
They sprang to earth; their friends, rejoicing, flocked
Around them, greeting them with grasp of hands 640
And with glad words, while the Gerenian knight,
Nestor, inquired: “Declare, illustrious chief,
Glory of Greece, Ulysses, how ye took
These horses: from the foe;—or did some god
Bestow them? They are glorious as the sun. 645
Oft am I midst the Trojans, for, though old,

I lag not idly at the ships; yet ne'er
Have my eyes looked on coursers like to these.
Some god, no doubt, has given them, for to Jove,
The God of storms, and Pallas, blue-eyed child 650
Of ægis-bearing Jove, ye both are dear."

Then sage Ulysses answered: "Pride of Greece!
Neleian Nestor, truly might a god
Have given us nobler steeds than even these.
All power is with the gods. But these of which 655
Thou askest, aged man, are brought from Thrace,
And newly come. Brave Diomed hath slain
Their lord, and twelve companions by his side, —
All princes. Yet another victim fell, —
A spy whom, near our ships, we put to death, — 660
A man whom Hector and his brother chiefs
Sent forth by midnight to explore our camp."

He spake, and gayly caused the firm-paced steeds
To pass the trench; the other Greeks, well pleased,
Went with him. When they reached the stately tent 665
Of Diomed, they led the coursers on
To stalls where Diomed's fleet horses stood
Champing the wholesome corn, and bound them there
With halters neatly shaped. Ulysses placed
Upon his galley's stern the bloody spoil 670

Of Dolon, to be made an offering
To Pallas. Then, descending to the sea,
They washed from knees and neck and thighs the grime
Of sweat; and when in the salt wave their limbs
Were cleansed, and all the frame refreshed, they stepped
Into the polished basins of the bath, 676
And, having bathed and rubbed with fragrant oil
Their limbs, they sat them down to a repast,
And from a brimming jar beside them drew,
And poured to Pallas first, the pleasant wine. 680

BOOK XI.

NOW did the Morning from her couch beside
Renowned Tithonus rise, that she might bring
The light to gods and men, when Jupiter
To the swift galleys of the Grecian host
Sent baleful Strife, who bore in hand aloft 5
War's ensigns. On the huge black ship that brought
Ulysses, in the centre of the fleet,
She stood, where she might shout to either side,—
To Telamonian Ajax in his tents
And to Achilles, who had ranged their ships 10
At each extreme of the Achaian camp,
Relying on their valor and strong arms.
Loud was the voice, and terrible, in which
She shouted from her station to the Greeks,
And into every heart it carried strength 15
And the resolve to combat manfully
And never yield. The battle now to them
Seemed more to be desired than the return

To their dear country in their roomy ships.
Atrides called aloud, exhorting them 20
To gird themselves for battle. Then he clad
Himself in glittering brass. First to his thighs
He bound the beautiful greaves with silver clasps,
Then fitted to his chest the breastplate given
By Cinyras, a pledge of kind intent; — 25
For, when he heard in Cyprus that the Greeks
Were bound for Ilium in their ships, he sent
This gift, a homage to the king of men; —
Ten were its bars of tawny bronze, and twelve
Were gold, and twenty tin; and 'on each side 30
Were three bronze serpents stretching toward the neck,
Curved like the colored bow which Saturn's son
Sets in the clouds, a sign to men. He hung
His sword, all glittering with its golden studs,
About his shoulders. In a silver sheath 35
It nestled, which was slung on golden rings.
And then he took his shield, a mighty orb,
And nobly wrought and strong and beautiful,
Bound with ten brazen circles. On its disk
Were twenty bosses of white tin, and one 40
Of tawny bronze just in the midst, where glared
A Gorgon's-head with angry eyes, round which

Were sculptured Fear and Flight. Along its band
Of silver twined a serpent wrought in bronze,
With three heads springing from one neck and formed 45
Into an orb. Upon his head he placed
A helmet rough with studs on every side,
And with four bosses, and a horse-hair plume
That nodded fearfully on high. He took
In hand two massive spears, brass-tipped and sharp, 50
That shone afar and sent their light to heaven,
Where Juno and Minerva made a sound
Like thunder in mid-sky, as honoring
The sovereign of Mycenæ rich in gold.

Each chief gave orders to his charioteer 55
To stay his horses firmly by the trench,
While they rushed forth in arms. At once arose,
Ere yet the sun was up, a mighty din.
They marshalled by the trench the men on foot;
The horse came after, with short space between. 60
The son of Saturn sent among their ranks
Confusion, and dropped down upon the host
Dews tinged with blood, in sign that he that day
Would send to Hades many a valiant chief.

The Trojans, on their side, in the mid-plain 65
Drew up their squadrons on a hill, around

The mighty Hector, and Polydamas
The blameless, and Æneas, who among
The sons of Troy was honored like a god,
And three sons of Antenor, who were named 70
Agenor and the noble Polybus
And the young Acamas of godlike bloom.
There Hector in the van uplifted bore
His broad round shield. As some portentous star
Breaks from the clouds and shines, and then again 75
Enters their shadow, Hector thus appeared
Among the foremost, issuing his commands,
Then sought the hindmost. All in brass, he shone
Like lightnings of the Ægis-bearer, Jove.
As when two lines of reapers, face to face, 80
In some rich landlord's field of barley or wheat
Move on, and fast the severed handfuls fall,
So, springing on each other, they of Troy
And they of Argos smote each other down,
And neither thought of ignominious flight. 85
They met each other man to man; they rushed
Like wolves to combat. Cruel Strife looked on
Rejoicing; she alone of all the gods
Was present in the battle; all the rest,
Far off, sat quiet in their palaces, 90

The glorious mansions built for them along
The summits of Olympus. Yet they all
Blamed Saturn's son that he should honor thus
The Trojans. The All-Father heeded not
Their murmurings, but, seated by himself
Apart, exulting in his sovereignty,
Looked on the city of Troy, the ships of Greece,
The gleam of arms, the slayers, and the slain.

95

While yet 't was morn, and still the holy light
Of day was brightening, fast the weapons smote
On either side, and fast the people fell;
But at the hour when on the mountain-slope
The wood-cutter makes ready his repast,
Weary with felling lofty trees, and glad
To rest, and eager for the grateful meal,
The Greeks, encouraging each other, charged
And broke the serried phalanxes of Troy.
First Agamemnon, springing forward, slew
The shepherd of his people and their chief,
Bienor, and his trusty comrade next, —
The charioteer Oileus, who had leaped
Down from his chariot to confront the king.
Him Agamemnon with his trenchant spear
Smote in the forehead as he came. The helm

100

105

110

Of massive brass was vain to stay the blow: 115
The weapon pierced it and the bone, and stained
The brain with blood; it felled him rushing on.
The monarch stripped the slain, and, leaving them
With their white bosoms bare, went on to slay
Isus and Antiphus, King Priam's sons, — 120
One born in wedlock, one of baser birth, —
Both in one chariot. Isus held the reins
While Antiphus, the high-born brother, fought.
These had Achilles once on Ida's height
Made prisoners, as they fed their flocks; he bound 125
Their limbs with osier bands, but gave them up
For ransom to the Trojans. Now the king
Of men, Atrides Agamemnon, pierced
Isus above the nipple with his spear,
And with his falchion smiting Antiphus 130
Beside the ear, he hurled him from his car.
Then hastening up, and stripping from the dead
Their shining mail, he knew them; he had seen
Both at the ships to which the fleet of foot,
Achilles, brought them bound from Ida's side. 135
As when a lion comes upon the haunt
Of a swift hind, to make an easy prey
Of her young fawns, and, with his powerful teeth

Seizing them, takes their tender lives; while she,
Though nigh, can bring no aid, but yields herself 140
To mortal fear, and, to escape his rage,
Flies swiftly through the wood of close-grown oaks,
With sweaty sides,—thus none of all the host
Of Trojans could avert from Priam's sons
Their fate, but fled in terror from the Greeks. 145
Next on Pisander and Hippolochus
Atrides rushed,—brave warriors both, and sons
Of brave Antimachus, the chief who took
Gold and rich gifts from Paris, and refused
To let the Trojans render Helen back 150
To fair-haired Menelaus. His two sons,
Both in one car, and reining their fleet steeds,
Atrides intercepted; they let fall
The embroidered reins, dismayed, as, lion-like,
Forward he came; and, cowering, thus they prayed:— 155
“Take us alive, Atrides, and accept
A worthy ransom, for Antimachus
Keeps in his halls large treasures,—brass and gold,
And well-wrought steel; and he will send, from these,
Large ransom, hearing we are at the fleet 160
Alive.” So prayed they with bland words, and met
Harsh answer: “Since ye call Antimachus

Your father, who in Trojan council once
Proposed that Menelaus, whom we sent
A legate with Ulysses the divine, 165
Should not return to Greece, but suffer death,
Your blood must answer for your father's guilt."

So spake the king, and, striking with his spear
Pisander's breast, he dashed him from the car.
Prone on the ground he lay. Hippolochus 170
Leaped down and met the sword. Atrides lopped
His hands and drave the weapon through his neck,
And sent the head to roll among the crowd.
And then he left the dead, and rushed to where
The ranks were in disorder; with him went 175
His well-armed Greeks: there they who fought on foot
Slaughtered the flying foot; the horsemen there
Clove horsemen down; the coursers' trampling feet
Raised the thick dust to shadow all the plain;
While Agamemnon cheered the Achaians on, 180
And chased and slew the foe. As when a fire
Seizes a thick-grown forest, and the wind
Drives it along in eddies, while the trunks
Fall with the boughs amid devouring flames,
So fell the flying Trojans by the hand 185
Of Agamemnon. Many high-maned steeds

Dragged noisily their empty cars among
The ranks of battle, never more to bear
Their charioteers, who lay upon the earth
The vulture's feast, a sorrow to their wives. 190

But Jove beyond the encountering arms, the dust,
The carnage, and the bloodshed and the din
Bore Hector, while Atrides in pursuit
Was loudly cheering the Achaians on.
Meantime the Trojans fled across the plain 195
Toward the wild fig-tree growing near the tomb
Of ancient Ilus, son of Dardanus,—
Eager to reach the town; and still the son
Of Atreus followed, shouting, and with hands
Blood-stained and dust-begrimed. And when they reached
The Scæan portals and the beechen tree, 201
They halted, waiting for the rear, like beeves
Chased panting by a lion who has come
At midnight on them, and has put the herd
To flight, and one of them to certain death,— 205
Whose neck he breaks with his strong teeth and then
Devours the entrails, lapping up the blood.
Thus did Atrides Agamemnon chase
The Trojans; still he slew the hindmost; still
They fled before him. Many by his hand 210

Fell from their chariots prone, for terrible
Beyond all others with the spear was he.
But when he now was near the city-wall,
The Father of immortals and of men
Came down from the high heaven, and took his seat 215
On many-fountained Ida. In his grasp
He held a thunderbolt, and this command
He gave to Iris of the golden wings:—

“Haste, Iris fleet of wing, and bear my words
To Hector:—While he sees the king of men, 220
Atrides, in the van and dealing death
Among the ranks of warriors, let him still
Give way, encouraging his men to hold
Unflinching battle with the enemy.
But when Atrides, wounded by a spear 225
Or arrow, shall ascend his chariot, then
Will I nerve Hector’s arm with strength to slay
Until he come to the good ships of Greece,
And the sun set, and hallowed night come down.”

He spake; and she, whose feet are like the wind 230
In swiftness, heeded the command, and flew
From Ida’s summit to the sacred town
Of Troy, and found the noble Hector, son
Of warlike Priam, standing mid the steeds
And the strong chariots, and, approaching, said:— 235

“O Hector, son of Priam, and like Jove
In council! Jove the All-Father bids me say,
As long as thou shalt see the king of men,
Atrides, in the van, and dealing death
Among the ranks of warriors, thou shalt still
Give way, encouraging thy men to hold
Unflinching battle with the enemy;
But when Atrides, wounded by a spear
Or arrow, shall ascend his chariot, then
Will Jove endue thy arm with strength to slay
Until thou come to the good ships of Greece,
And the sun set, and hallowed night come down.”

240

245

So the fleet Iris spake, and went her way;
While Hector, leaping from his car in arms,
And wielding his sharp spears, went everywhere
Among the Trojan ranks, exhorting them
To combat, and renewed the stubborn fight.
They rallied and stood firm against the Greeks.
The Greeks, in turn, made strong their phalanxes.
The battle raged again, as front to front
They stood, while Agamemnon eagerly
Pressed forward, proud to lead the van in fight.

250

255

Say, Muses, dwellers of Olympus! who
First of the Trojans or their brave allies

Encountered Atreus' son? Iphidamas, 260
Son of Antenor, strong and daring, bred
On the rich soil of Thrace, the nurse of flocks.
His grandsire Cisseus, from whose loins the fair
Theano sprang, had reared him from a child
Within his palace; and, when he attained 265
Youth's glorious prime, still kept him, giving him
His child to wife. He wedded her, but left
At once the bridal chamber when he heard
Of the Greek war on Ilium, and set sail
With twelve beaked galleys. These he afterward 270
Left at Percopè,—marching on to Troy.
And he it was who came to meet the son
Of Atreus. As the heroes now drew near
Each other, Agamemnon missed his aim;
His thrust was parried. Then Iphidamas 275
Dealt him beneath the breastplate on the belt
A vigorous blow, and urged the spear with all
His strength of arm; yet through the plated belt
It could not pierce, for there it met a plate
Of silver, and its point was turned like lead. 280
With lion strength, Atrides seized and drew
The weapon toward him, plucked it from the hand
That held it, and let fall his falchion's edge

Upon the Trojan's neck and laid him dead.
 Unhappy youth! he slept an iron sleep,— 285
 Slain fighting for his country, far away
 From the young virgin bride yet scarcely his,
 For whom large marriage-gifts he made,— of beeves
 A hundred,—and had promised from the flocks
 That thronged his fields a thousand sheep and goats. 290
 Atrides Agamemnon spoiled the slain,
 And bore his glorious armor off among
 The Argive host. Antenor's elder son,
 Illustrious Coön, saw, and bitter grief
 For his slain brother dimmed his eyes. He stood 295
 Aside, with his spear couched, while unaware
 The noble Agamemnon passed, and pierced
 The middle of the monarch's arm below
 The elbow; through the flesh the shining point
 Passed to the other side. The king of men, 300
 Atrides, shuddered, yet refrained not then
 From combat; but with his wind-seasoned spear
 He rushed on Coön, who, to drag away
 His father's son Iphidamas, had seized
 The body by the feet, and called his friends, 305
 The bravest, to his aid. Atrides thrust
 His brazen spear below the bossy shield,

And slew him as he drew the corpse, and o'er
The dead Iphidamas struck off his head.

Thus were Antenor's sons—their doom fulfilled— 310
Sent by Atrides to the realm of death.

And then he ranged among the enemy's ranks
With wielded lance and sword and ponderous stones,
While yet the warm blood issued from his wound.

But when the wound grew dry, and ceased to flow 315
With blood, keen anguish seized his vigorous frame.

As when a woman feels the piercing pangs
Of travail brought her by the Ilythian maids,
Daughters of Juno, who preside at births,

And walk the ministers of bitter pains,— 320

Such anguish seized on Agamemnon's frame;

And, leaping to his chariot-seat, he bade

The guider of the steeds make haste to reach

The roomy ships, for he was overcome

With pain; but first he shouted to the Greeks:— 325

“O friends, the chiefs and princes of the Greeks!

Yours is the duty to drive back the war

From our good ships, since all-disposing Jove

Forbids me, for this day, to lead the fight.”

He spake. The charioteer applied the lash, 330

And not unwillingly the long-maned steeds

Flew toward the hollow ships; upon their breasts
Gathered the foam; beneath their rapid feet
Arose the dust, as from the battle's din
They bore the wounded warrior. Hector saw 335
The flight of Agamemnon, and aloud
Called to the Trojans and the Lycians thus:—
“Trojan and Lycian warriors, and ye sons
Of Dardanus, who combat hand to hand,
Be men; be mindful of your fame in war. 340
Our mightiest foe withdraws; Saturnian Jove
Crowns me with glory. Urge your firm-paced steeds
On the brave Greeks, and win yet nobler fame.”

He spake. His words gave courage and new strength
To every heart. As when a hunter cheers 345
His white-toothed dogs against some lioness
Or wild boar from the forest, Hector thus,
The son of Priam, terrible as Mars
The slayer of men, cheered on the gallant sons
Of Troy against the Greeks. Himself, inspired 350
With fiery valor, rushed among the foes
In the mid-battle foremost, like a storm
That swoops from heaven, and on the dark blue sea
Falls suddenly, and stirs it to its depths.

Who then was slain the first, and who the last, 355

By Hector, Priam's son, whom Jove designed
 To honor? First, Asæus; Dolops, son
 Of Clytis; and Autonoüs; and then
 Opites and Opheltius; next to whom
 Æsymnus, Agelaus, Orus fell,

360

And resolute Hipponoüs the last.

All these, the princes of the Greeks, he slew,
 Then smote the common crowd. As when a gale
 Blows from the west upon the mass of cloud
 Piled up before the south wind's powerful breath,

365

And tears it with a mighty hurricane,
 While the swoln billows tumble, and their foam
 Is flung on high before the furious blast,

So by the sword of Hector fell the heads
 Of the Greek soldiery; and there had been
 Ruin and ravage not to be repaired,

370

And the defeated Greeks had flung themselves
 Into their ships, had not Ulysses then
 Exhorted thus Tydides Diomed:—

“Tydides! what has quenched within our hearts
 Their fiery valor? Come, my friend, and take
 Thy stand beside me: foul disgrace were ours
 Should crested Hector make our fleet his prize.”

375

And thus the valiant Diomed replied:—

“Most willingly I stand, and bear my part 380
In battle; but with little hope, for Jove,
The God of storms, awards the day to Troy.”

He spake, and pierced Thymbræus with his spear
Through the left breast, and dashed him from his car.
Meanwhile Ulysses struck Molion down, 385
The prince's stately comrade. These they left
Never to fight again, and made their way
Through the thick squadrons, carrying, as they went,
Confusion with them. As two fearless boars
Rush on the hounds, so, mingling in the war, 390
They bore the foe before them, and the Greeks
Welcomed a respite from the havoc made
By noble Hector. Next they seized a car
Which bore two chiefs, the bravest of their host,—
Sons of Percosian Merops, who was skilled 395
Beyond all men in portents. He enjoined
His sons to keep aloof from murderous war.
Yet did they not obey him, for the fate
That doomed the twain to death impelled them on;
And Diomed, the mighty with the spear, 400
Spoiled them of life, and bore their armor off,
A glittering prize. Meantime Ulysses slew
Hippodamus, and next Hypirochus.

The son of Saturn looked from Ida's height,
And bade the battle rage on either side 405
With equal fury: both the encountering hosts
Slew and were slain. Tydides with his spear
Smote on the hip the chief Agastrophus,
The son of Pæon, thoughtless wretch, whose steeds
Were not at hand for flight; his charioteer 410
Held them at distance, while their master rushed
Among the foremost warriors till he fell.
Hector perceived his fall, as through the files
He looked, and straightway hastened to the spot
With shouts; and after him came rapidly 415
The phalanxes of Trojans. Diomed,
The great in battle, shuddered as he saw,
And thus addressed Ulysses, who was near:—
“Lo! the destroyer, furious Hector, comes!
Let us stand firm, and face and drive him back.” 420
He said, and cast his brandished lance, nor missed
The mark: it smote the helm on Hector's head.
The brass glanced from the brass; it could not pierce
To the fair skin; the high and threefold helm—
A gift from Phœbus—turned the point aside. 425
The chief fell back, and, mingling with the throng,
Dropped on one knee, and yet upheld himself

With one broad palm upon the ground, while night .
Darkened his eyes. The son of Tydeus sprang
To seize his spear, which now stood fixed in earth 430
Among the foremost warriors. In that time
Did Hector breathe again, and, having leaped
Into his chariot, he avoided death,
By mingling with the crowd; while, spear in hand,
Brave Diomed pursued him, shouting thus:— 435

“This time, thou cur, hast thou escaped thy doom,
Though it was nigh thee. Phœbus rescues thee—
The god to whom thou dost address thy prayers—
Whene’er thou ventarest mid the clash of spears.
Yet will I surely slay thee when we meet, 440
If any god be on my side; and now
I go to strike where’er I find a foe.”

He spake, and struck the son of Pæon down,
Skilful to wield the spear. But now the spouse
Of fair-haired Helen — Alexander — stood 445
Leaning against a pillar by the tomb
Of the Dardanian Ilus, who had been
An elder of the people; and he bent
His bow against the monarch Diomed,
Who at that moment knelt to strip the slain 450
Of the rich breastplate, and the shield that hung

Upon his shoulders, and the massive casque.
The Trojan drew the bow's elastic horn,
And sent an arrow that not vainly flew,
But, striking the right foot, pierced through, and reached
The ground beneath. Then Paris, with a laugh, 456
Sprang from his ambush, shouting boastfully:—

“Lo, thou art smitten! Not in vain my shaft
Has flown; and would that it had pierced thy groin
And slain thee! Then the Trojans had obtained 460
Reprieve from slaughter,—they who dread thee now
As bleating goats a lion.” Undismayed,
The valiant Diomed made answer thus:—

“Archer and railer! proud of thy smart bow,
And ogler of the women! wouldst thou make 465
Trial of valor hand to hand with me,
Thy bow should not avail thee, nor thy sheaf
Of many arrows. Thou dost idly boast
That thou hast hit my foot. I heed it not.
It is as if a woman or a child 470
Had struck me. Lightly falls the weapon-stroke
Of an unwarlike weakling. 'Tis not so
With me, for when one feels my weapon's touch,
It passes through him, and he dies; his wife
Tears with her hands her cheeks; his little ones 475

Are orphans; earth is crimsoned with his blood;
And flocking round his carcass in decay,
More numerous than women, are the birds."

He spake. Ulysses, mighty with the spear,
Came near and stood before him while he sat 480
Concealed, and drew the arrow from his foot.
Keen was the agony that suddenly
Shot through his frame: he leaped into his car,
And bade his charioteer make haste to reach
The roomy ships: the pain had reached his heart. 485
Ulysses, the great spearman, now was left
Alone, no Greek remaining by his side;
For fear had seized them all. With inward grief
The hero thus addressed his mighty soul:—

"What will become of me? A great disgrace 490
Will overtake me if I flee in fear
Before this multitude; and worse will be
My fate if I am taken here alone,
While Jove has driven away the other Greeks
In terror. Why these questions, since I know 495
That cowards skulk from combat, while the brave,
Wounded or wounding others, keeps his ground?"

While thus he reasoned with himself, the ranks
Of Trojans armed with bucklers came and closed

Around their dreaded enemy. As when 500
A troop of vigorous dogs and youths assail
From every side a wild boar issuing forth
From a deep thicket, whetting the white tusks
Within his crooked jaws; they press around,
And hear his gnashings, yet beware to come 505
Too nigh the terrible animal,—so rushed
The Trojans round Ulysses, the beloved
Of Jupiter. Then first the hero smote
Deïopites on the shoulder-blade,
And next struck Thoön down, and Ennomus, 510
And in the navel pierced Chersidamas
With his sharp spear, below the bossy shield,
When leaping from his chariot. In the dust
He fell, and grasped the earth with dying hands.
Ulysses left them there, and with his spear 515
He wounded Charops, son of Hippasus,
And brother of brave Socus. Socus saw,
And hastened to his aid, and, standing near,
The godlike chief bespake Ulysses thus:—
“Renowned Ulysses! of whose arts and toils 520
There is no end, thou either shalt to-day
Boast to have slain two sons of Hippasus,
Brave as they are, and stripped them of their arms,
Or, smitten by my javelin, lose thy life.”

He spake, and smote the Grecian's orbèd shield. 525
The swift spear, passing through the shining disk,
And fixed in the rich breastplate, tore the skin
From all his side; yet Pallas suffered not
The blade to reach the inner parts. At once
The chief perceived that Socus had not given 530
A mortal wound, and, falling back a step,
Thus spake: "Unhappy youth, thy doom will soon
O'ertake thee. Though thou forcest me to pause
From combat with the Trojans, I declare,
This day thou sufferest the black doom of death. 535
Thou, smitten by my spear, shalt bring to me
Increase of glory, and shalt yield thy soul
To the grim horseman Pluto." Thus he spake,
While Socus turned to flee; and as he turned,
Ulysses with the spear transfixèd his back, 540
And drave the weapon through his breast: he fell,
With armor clashing, to the earth, while thus
The great Ulysses gloried over him:—
"O Socus! son of warlike Hippasus
The horseman! death has overtaken thee, 545
And thou couldst not escape. Unhappy one!
Now thou art dead thy father will not come
To close thy eyes, nor she, the honored one

Who gave thee birth; but birds of prey shall flap
Their heavy wings above thee, and shall tear 550
Thy flesh, while I in dying shall receive
Due funeral honors from the noble Greeks."

He spake, and from his wounded side drew forth,
And from his bossy shield, the ponderous spear
Which warlike Socus threw. A gush of blood 555
Followed, and torturing pain. Now, when they saw
Ulysses bleed, the gallant sons of Troy
Called to each other, rushing in a crowd
To where he stood. Retreating as they came,
He shouted to his comrades. Thrice he raised 560
His voice as loud as human lungs could shout;
Thrice warlike Menelaus heard the cry,
And spake at once to Ajax at his side:—

"Most noble Ajax, son of Telamon,
Prince of thy people! to my ear is brought 565
The cry of that unconquerable man,
Ulysses, seemingly as if the foe
Had hemmed him round alone, and pressed him sore
In combat. Break we through the crowd, and bring
Succor, lest harm befall him, though so brave, — 570
Fighting among the Trojans thus alone,—
And lest the Greeks should lose their mighty chief."

He spake, and led the way; his godlike friend
Followed. They found Ulysses, dear to Jove,—
The Trojans thronging round him like a troop 575
Of ravening jackals round an antlered stag
Which one who hunts upon the mountain-side
Hath stricken with an arrow from his bow:
By flight the stag escapes, while yet the blood
Is warm and easily the limbs are moved; 580
But when at last the shaft hath quelled his strength,
The hungry jackals in the forest-shade
Among the hills attack him, till by chance
The dreaded lion comes: alarmed, they flee,
And he devours the prey So in that hour, 585
Many and brave, the sons of Troy pursued
Ulysses, skilled in war and wiles; while he
Wielded the spear and warded off the day
Of death. Then Ajax, coming near him, stood,
With his tall buckler, like a tower of strength 590
Beside him, and the Trojans fled in fear
On all sides. Warlike Menelaus took
Ulysses by the hand, and led him forth
From the thronged spot, while his attendant brought
The chariot near him. Ajax sprang upon 595
The Trojans, slaying Doryclus, a son

Of Priam, basely-born. Then Pandocus
He wounded; next he struck Lysander down,
Pyrrhus and Pyrrhus. As a stream,
Swoln to a torrent by the showers of Jove, 600
Sweeps down, from hill to plain, dry oaks and pines,
And pours into the sea a muddy flood,
So mighty Ajax routed and pursued
The Trojans o'er the plain, and cut his way
Through steeds and warriors. Hector knew not this. 605
He fought where, on the battle's left, beside
The Xanthus, fastest fell the slain, and round
Great Nestor and the brave Idomeneus
Arose a mighty tumult. In that throng
Did Hector mingle with his spear and steeds, 610
Performing feats of valor, and laid waste
The ranks of youthful warriors. Yet the Greeks
Would not have yielded ground, if Paris, spouse
Of fair-haired Helen, had not forced the chief
Machaon, fighting gallantly, to pause; 615
For with an arrow triple-barbed he pierced
The chief's right shoulder, and the valiant Greeks
Feared lest the battle turn and he be slain.
And thus Idomeneus to Nestor said:—
“Neleian Nestor, glory of the Greeks, 620

Haste, mount thy chariot; let Machaon take
A place beside thee; urge thy firm-paced steeds
Rapidly toward the fleet; a leech like him,
Who cuts the arrow from the wound and soothes
The pain with balms, is worth a host to us."

625

He spake; and the Gerenian knight obeyed,
And climbed the car in haste. Machaon, son
Of Æsculapius the peerless leech,
Mounted beside him; Nestor lashed the steeds,
And toward the roomy ships, which well they knew.
And longed to reach, they flew with eager speed.

630

Meantime Cebriones, who had his seat
By Hector in the chariot, saw the ranks
Of Troy disordered, and addressed the chief:—

"While we, O Hector, here are mid the Greeks
Just in the skirts of the tumultuous fray,
The other Trojans, men and steeds, are thrown
Into confusion where the warriors throng,
For Telamonian Ajax puts their ranks
To rout; I know him well by that broad shield
Borne on his shoulders. Thither let us drive
Our steeds and chariot, where in desperate strife
Meet horse and foot and hew each other down,
And a perpetual clamor fills the air."

635

640

He spake; and with the whistling lash he struck 645
The long-maned steeds, and, as they felt the stroke,
Forward they flew with the swift car among
The Greeks and Trojans, trampling in their way
Corpses and shields. The axle underneath
Was steeped in blood; the rim of the chariot-seat 650
Was foul with the red drops which from their hoofs
The coursers sprinkled and the wheels threw up.
Then Hector strove, by rushing on the crowd,
To pierce it and break through it. To the Greeks
His coming brought destruction and dismay; 655
And well his spear was wielded. Through the ranks
Of other warriors with the spear he ranged,
With sword and ponderous stones; yet warily
He shunned the fight with Ajax Telamon.

Then Father Jove Almighty touched with fear 660
The heart of Ajax. All amazed he stood,
And cast his sevenfold buckler of bull's-hide
Upon his back, and, terrified, withdrew.
Now casting glances like a beast of prey
From side to side, he turned to right and left, 665
And, slowly yielding, moved knee after knee.
As when the rustics with their hounds drive off
A hungry lion from their stalls of kine,

Whom, watching all the night, they suffer not
To make their herd a prey; but he, intent 670
On ravin, rushes forward, yet in vain; `

For many a javelin flies from daring hands
Against him, many a blazing torch is swung,
At which, though fierce, he trembles, and at morn
Stalks off in sullen mood;—so Ajax, sad 675
At heart, and fearing for the Grecian fleet,
Unwillingly fell back before the foe.

And as, when entering in a field, an ass
Slow-paced, whose flanks have broken many a shaft
To splinters, crops the harvest as it grows, 680
And boys attack him with their rods,—though small
Their strength, —but scarce, till he has browsed his fill,
Can drive him forth,—so did the gallant sons
Of Troy, and their allies from distant lands,
Continually pursue the mighty son 685
Of Telamon, and hurl their spears against
The centre of his shield. And now he wheeled,
As conscious of great valor, and repulsed
The crowding phalanxes; and now again
He turned to flee. And thus he kept the foe 690
From reaching the swift galleys, while he stood
Between the Greeks and Trojans, terrible

In wrath. The javelins hurled by daring hands
Against him—some hung fixed in his broad shield;
And many, ere they came to his fair skin, 695
Fell midway,—eager though they were to pierce
The warrior's side,—and plunged into the earth.

Eurypylus, Evæmon's noble son,
Saw Ajax sorely pressed with many darts,
And came and stood beside him, taking aim 700
With his bright spear, and in the liver smote,
Beneath the midriff, Apisaon, son
Of Phausias, and a prince among his tribe.
His knees gave way, and down he sank in death.
But godlike Alexander, who beheld 705
The slayer stripping Apisaon's corpse
Of armor, at that moment bent his bow,
And pierced Eurypylus in the right thigh.
The reed brake in the wound. He writhed with pain,
And mingled with his fellows in the ranks, 710
Avoiding death, yet shouting to the Greeks:—

“O friends, the chiefs and leaders of the Greeks,
Rally and keep your ground; ward off the fate
Of death from Ajax, who is sorely pressed
With darts, and, much I fear, may not escape 715
Safe from this stormy conflict. Stand ye firm
Around the mighty son of Telamon.”

So spake the wounded warrior; while his friends
 Rallied around him, with their shields inclined
 Against their shoulders, and with lifted spears. 720
 And Ajax came and joined them; then he turned,
 And firmly faced the foe. The Greeks renewed
 The combat with a rage like that of fire.

Now meantime the Neleian coursers, steeped
 In sweat, were bearing Nestor and the prince 725
 Machaon from the battle. On the prow
 Of his great ship, Achilles, swift of foot,
 Looked forth, and, gazing on the hard-fought fray
 And the sad rout, beheld them. Then he called
 His friend Patroclus, shouting from the ship. 730
 Patroclus heard, within the tent, and came,
 Glorious as Mars;—yet with that day began
 His woes. The gallant Menœtiades
 Made answer thus: “Why callest thou my name,
 Achilles, and what needest thou of me?” 735

And thus rejoined Achilles, swift of foot:—
 “Son of Menœtius, nobly born, and well
 Beloved by me, the Greeks, I deem, will soon
 Be at my knees, imploring aid; for now
 A hard necessity besets their host. 740
 But go, Patroclus, dear to Jove, and ask

Of Nestor who it is that he hath brought
 Thus wounded from the field. Seen from behind,
 His form was like Machaon,—wholly like
 That son of Æsculapius; but the face 745
 I saw not, as the rapid steeds flew by.”

He spake. Patroclus hearkened to his friend,
 And hastened to the Grecian tents and ships.

Now when they reached the tent of Neleus' son,
 The warriors in the chariot set their feet 750
 Upon the nourishing earth. Eurymedon,
 The old man's charioteer, took from the mares
 Their harness; while the chieftains cooled themselves,
 And dried their sweaty garments in the breeze,
 Facing the border of the sea, and then, 755
 Entering the tent of Nestor, sat them down
 On couches. Hecamedé, bright of hair,
 Prepared for them a mingled draught; the maid,
 A daughter of the great Arsinoüs, came
 From Tenedos with Nestor, when the town 760
 Was ravaged by Achilles, and the Greeks
 Gave her to Nestor, chosen from the rest
 For him, as wisest of their counsellors.
 First she drew forth a table fairly wrought,
 Of polished surface, and with steel-blue feet, 765

And on it placed a brazen tray which bore
A thirst-provoking onion, honeycomb,
And sacred meal of wheat. Near these she set
A noble beaker which the ancient chief
Had brought from home, embossed with studs of gold. 770
Four were its handles, and each handle showed
Two golden turtles feeding, while below
Two others formed the base. Another hand
Could scarce have raised that beaker from its place,
But Nestor lifted it with ease. The maid, 775
Fair as a goddess, mingled Pramnian wine,
And grated o'er it, with a rasp of brass,
A goat's-milk cheese, and, sprinkling the white flour
Upon it, bade them drink. With this they quenched
Their parching thirst, and then amused the time 780
With pleasant talk. Patroclus to the door
Meantime, a godlike presence, came, and stood.
The old man, as he saw him, instantly
Rose from his princely seat and seized his hand,
And led him in and bade him sit; but he 785
Refused the proffered courtesy, and said:—

“Nay, 't is no time to sit: persuade me not,
Nursling of Jove; for he is to be feared,
And prone to wrath, who sent me to inquire

What wounded man is with thee; but I know, — 790
Now that I see Machaon sitting here,
The shepherd of the people. I must haste
Back to Achilles, bearing my report.
Thou knowest, ancient chief, how quick he is
To take offence and blame the innocent.” 795

Then Nestor, the Gerenian knight, rejoined: —
“Why does Achilles pity thus the sons
Of Greece when wounded? Little can he know
What sorrow reigns throughout the Grecian host
While, smitten in the close or distant fight, 800
Our bravest lie disabled in their ships.
The valiant son of Tydeus — Diomed —
Is wounded; wounded Agamemnon lies,
And the great wielder of the javelin,
Ulysses. By an arrow in the thigh 805
Eurypylus is smitten, and I now
Bring home this warrior with an arrow-wound.
Yet doth Achilles, valiant as he is,
Care nothing for the Greeks. Will he then wait
Till our swift galleys, moored upon the shore, 810
After a vain defence shall feed the flames
Lit by the enemy's hand, and we be slain,
And perish, heaps on heaps? My strength is now

Not that which dwelt in these once active limbs.
Would I were strong and vigorous as of yore, 815
When strife arose between our men and those
Of Elis for our oxen driven away,
And, driving off their beeves in turn, I slew
The Elean chief, the brave Itymoneus,
Son of Hypirochus! For, as he sought 820
To save his herd, a javelin from my arm
Smote him the first among his band. He fell;
His rustic followers fled on every side;
And mighty was the spoil we took: of beeves
We drave off fifty herds, as many flocks 825
Of sheep, of swine as many, and of goats
An equal number, and of yellow steeds
Thrice fifty;—these were mares, and by their sides
Ran many a colt. We drave them all within
Neleian Pylos in the night. Well pleased 830
Was Neleus, that so large a booty fell
To me, who entered on the war so young.
When morning brake, the heralds' cry was heard
Summoning all the citizens to meet
To whom from fruitful Elis debts were due; 835
And then the princes of the Pyleans came,
And made division of the spoil. For much

The Epeians owed us: we were yet but few
In Pylos, and had suffered grievously.
The mighty Hercules in former years 840
Had made us feel his wrath, and of our men
Had slain the bravest: of the twelve who drew
Their birth from Neleus, I alone am left;
The others fell. The Epeians brazen-mailed
Saw this, delighted, and insulted us 845
And did us wrong. When now the spoil was shared
The old man for himself reserved a herd
Of oxen, and a numerous flock of sheep,—
Three hundred, with their shepherds,—for to him
Large debts were due in Elis. He had sent 850
Four horses once, of peerless speed, with cars,
To win a tripod, the appointed prize.
Augeias, king of men, detained them there,
And sent the grieving charioteer away.
My father, angered at the monarch's words 855
And acts, took large amends, and gave the rest
To share among the people, that no one
Might leave the ground, defrauded of his right.
All this was justly done, and we performed
Due sacrifices to the gods, throughout 860
The city;—when the third day came, and brought

The Epeians all at once, in all their strength, —
Both men on foot and prancing steeds. With these
Came the Molions twain, well armed, though young
And yet untrained to war. There is a town 865
Named Thryoëssa, on a lofty hill
Far off beside Alpheius, on the edge
Of sandy Pylos. They beleaguered this,
And sought to overthrow it. As they crossed
The plain, Minerva came, a messenger, 870
By night from Mount Olympus, bidding us
Put on our armor. Not unwillingly
The Pyleans mustered, but in eager haste
For battle. Yet did Neleus not consent
That I should arm myself, — he hid my steeds; 875
For still he deemed me inexperienced in war.
Yet even then, although I fought on foot,
I won great honor even among the knights;
For so had Pallas favored me. A stream
Named Minyëius pours into the sea 880
Near to Arena, where the Pylean knights
Waited the coming of the holy morn,
While those who fought on foot came thronging in.
Thence, with our host complete, and all in arms,
We marched, and reached at noon the sacred stream 885

Alpheius, where to Jove Omnipotent
We offered chosen victims, and a bull
To the river-god, another to the god
Of ocean, and a heifer yet unbroke
To blue-eyed Pallas. Then we banqueted, 890
In bands, throughout the army, and lay down
In armor by the river-side to sleep.
Meantime the brave Epeians stood around
The city, resolute to lay it waste.
But first was to be done a mighty work 895
Of war; for as the glorious sun appeared
Above the earth we dashed against the foe,
Praying to Jove and Pallas. When the fight
Between the Eleans and the Pylean host
Was just begun, I slew a youthful chief,— 900
Mulus,—and bore away his firm-paced steeds.
The fair-haired Agamedè, eldest-born
Of King Augeias' daughters, was his spouse;
And well to her each healing herb was known
That springs from the great earth. As he drew near, 905
I smote him with my brazen lance: he fell
To earth: I sprang into his car, and stood
Among the foremost warriors; while, around,
The brave Epeians, as they saw him fall,—

The leader of their knights, their mightiest 910
In battle, — turned and, panic-stricken, fled,
Each his own way. I followed on their flight
Like a black tempest; fifty cars I took,
And from each car I dashed two warriors down,
Pierced by my spear. And now I should have slain 915
The young Molions also, Actor's sons,
Had not their father, he who shakes the earth,
Enshrouded them in mist, and hidden them
From all pursuit. Then with victorious might
Did Jove endue our arms, while we pursued 920
The foe across a region strewn with shields, —
Slaying, and gathering spoil, — until our steeds
Came to Buprasium, rich in fields of wheat,
And to the Olenian rock, and to the hill
Alesium in Coloné. Pallas there 925
Stayed our pursuit, and bade our host return.
There slew I the last man, and left him there.
And then the Achaians, guiding their swift steeds
Homeward to Pylos from Buprasium, gave
Great thanks to Jupiter among the gods, 930
And Nestor among men. Such was I then
Among the heroes; but Achilles keeps
His valor for himself alone, — and yet

Bitterly must he grieve when he beholds
Our people perish. O my friend! how well 935
Menœtius charged thee when he sent thee forth,
From Phthia, to Atrides! We were both—
The nobly-born Ulysses and myself—
Within the palace, and we clearly heard
What he commanded thee. For we had come 940
To Peleus' stately dwelling, on our way
Gathering a host in fertile Greece, and saw
The great Menœtius there, and there we found
Achilles with thee. There the aged knight
Peleus was burning, in the palace-court, 945
A steer's fat thighs to Jove the Thunderer,
And lifted up a golden cup and poured
Dark wine upon the blazing sacrifice.
And both of you were busy with the flesh
When we were at the threshold. As he saw 950
Our coming, in surprise Achilles sprang
Toward us, and took our hands and led us in,
Bade us be seated, and before us placed
The generous banquet due to stranger-guests.
Then, having feasted, I began discourse, 955
Exhorting you to join us. Both of you
At once consented, and your fathers gave

Their admonitions. Aged Peleus charged
His son Achilles to excel the rest
In valor, while Menœtius, in his turn, 960
The son of Actor, gave thee this command:—
“‘My son, Achilles is the nobler born,
But thou art elder. He surpasses thee
By far in warlike might, but thou must prompt
His mind with prudent counsels; thou must warn 965
And guide him; he will hearken to thy words
Meant for his good.’ The old man charged thee thus,
Thou hast forgotten it. Yet speak thou now
To Peleus’ warlike son; and haply he
May heed thy counsels. Thou perchance may’st bend 970
His will—who knows?—by thy persuasive words;
For wholesome are the warnings of a friend.
Yet, if he shrink from some predicted doom,
Or if his goddess-mother have revealed
Aught of Jove’s counsels to him, then, at least 975
Let him send thee to war, and let his troop
Of Myrmidons go with thee, so that thou
May’st carry succor to the Greeks. Yet more,—
Let him permit thee in the field to wear
His glorious armor, that the Trojan host, 980
Beholding thee so like to him, may shun

The combat, and the warlike sons of Greece,
 Hard-pressed, may breathe again, and find at length
 A respite from the conflict. Ye, who still
 Are fresh and vigorous, shall assault and drive
 Townward the weary foe from camp and fleet."

985

He spake. The spirit of the youth took fire,
 And instantly he hastened toward the ships
 Of Peleus' son. But when he came where lay
 The galleys of Ulysses the divine,

990

Where was the assembly-place and judgment-seat,
 And where the altars of the immortals stood,
 Evæmon's noble son, Eurypylus,
 Met him as from the battle-field he came

Halting, and with an arrow in his thigh.

995

The sweat ran down his shoulders and his brow,
 And the black blood was oozing from his wound,
 Yet was his spirit untamed. The gallant youth,
 Son of Menœtius, saw with grief, and said: —

"Unhappy chiefs and princes of the Greeks!
 Are ye then doomed to feast with your fair limbs
 The famished dogs of Ilium, far away
 From friends and country? Tell me, child of Jove,
 Gallant Eurypylus, will yet the Greeks
 Withstand the mighty Hector, or give way
 And perish, overtaken by his spear?"

1000

1005

And thus the wise Eurypylus replied:—
 “Nursling of Jove, Patroclus! for the Greeks
 There is no help, and all at their black^o ships
 Must perish; for within them even now 1010
 All those who were our bravest warriors lie,
 Wounded in close encounter, or from far,
 By Trojan hands, whose strength with every hour
 Becomes more terrible. Give now thine aid
 And take me to my ship, and cut away 1015
 The arrow from my thigh, and from the part
 Cleanse with warm water the dark blood, and shed
 Soothing and healing balms upon the wound,
 As taught thee by Achilles, who had learned
 The art from Chiron, righteous in his day 1020
 Beyond all other Centaurs. Now the leech
 Machaon lies, I think, among the tents,
 Wounded, and needs the aid of others’ skill,
 And Podalirius out upon the plain
 Helps stem the onset of the Trojan host.” 1025
 Then spake the valiant Menœtiades:—
 “O brave Eurypylus! what yet will be
 The end of this, and what are we to do?
 Even now I bear a message on my way
 From reverend Nestor, guardian of the Greeks, 1030

To the great warrior, Peleus' son; and yet
I must not leave thee in thine hour of need."

He spake; and, lifting in his arms the prince,
He bore him to his tent. A servant spread,
Upon his entering, hides to form a couch; 1035
And there Patroclus laid him down and cut
The rankling arrow from his thigh, and shed
Warm water on the wound to cleanse away
The purple blood, and last applied a root
Of bitter flavor to assuage the smart, 1040
Bruising it first within his palms: the pangs
Ceased; the wound dried; the blood no longer flowed.

BOOK XII.

THUS in the camp Menœtius' valiant son
Tended Eurypylus, and dressed his wounds;
While yet in mingled throngs the warriors fought,—
Trojans and Greeks. Nor longer was the trench
A barrier for the Greeks, nor the broad wall 5
Which they had built above it to defend
Their fleet; for all around it they had drawn
The trench, yet not with chosen hecatombs
Paid to the gods, that so it might protect
The galleys and the heaps of spoil they held. 10
Without the favor of the gods it rose,
And therefore was not long to stand entire.
As long as Hector lived, and Peleus' son
Was angered, and King Priam's city yet
Was not o'erthrown, so long the massive wall 15
Built by the Greeks stood firm. But when at length
The bravest of the Trojans had been slain,
And many of the Greeks were dead,—though still

Others survived,—and when in the tenth year
The city of Priam fell, and in their ships 20
The Greeks went back to their beloved land,
Then did Apollo and the god of sea
Consult together to destroy the wall
By turning on it the resistless might
Of rivers, all that from the Idæan heights 25
Flow to the ocean,—Rhesus, Granicus,
Heptaporus, Caresus, Rhodius,
Æsepus, and Scamander's hallowed stream,
And Simois, in whose bed lay many shields
And helms and bodies of slain demigods. 30
Phœbus Apollo turned the mouths of these
All toward one spot; nine days against the wall
He bade their currents rush, while Jupiter
Poured constant rain, that floods might overwhelm
The rampart; and the god who shakes the earth, 35
Wielding his trident, led the rivers on.
He flung among the billows the huge beams
And stones which, with hard toil, the Greeks had laid
For the foundations. Thus he levelled all
Beside the hurrying Hellespont, destroyed 40
The bulwarks utterly, and overspread
The long broad shore with sand; and then he brought

Again the rivers to the ancient beds
In which their gently flowing waters ran.

This yet was to be done in time to come
By Neptune and Apollo. Meanwhile raged
Battle and tumult round that strong-built wall.
The towers in all their timbers rang with blows;
And, driven as by the scourge of Jove, the Greeks,
Hemmed closely in beside their roomy ships,
Trembled at Hector, the great scatterer
Of squadrons, fighting, as he did before,
With all a whirlwind's might. As when a boar
Or lion mid the hounds and huntsmen stands,
Fearfully strong, and fierce of eye, and they
In square array assault him, and their hands
Fling many a javelin;—yet his noble heart
Fears not, nor does he fly, although at last
His courage cause his death; and oft he turns,
And tries their ranks; and where he makes a rush
The ranks give way;—so Hector moved and turned
Among the crowd, and bade his followers cross
The trench. The swift-paced horses ventured not
The leap, but stood upon the edge and neighed
Aloud, for the wide space affrighted them;
And hard it was to spring across, or pass

From side to side, for on each side the brink
Was steep, and bristled with sharp stakes, close set
And strong, which there the warrior sons of Greece
Had planted, a defence against the foe. 70

No steed that whirled the rapid car along
Could enter, but the soldiery on foot
Eagerly sought to pass, and in these words
Polydamas to daring Hector spake:—

“Hector, and ye who lead the troops of Troy 75
And our auxiliars! rashly do we seek
To urge our rapid steeds across the trench
So hard to pass, beset with pointed stakes,—
And the Greek wall so near. The troops of horse
Cannot descend nor combat there: the space 80
Is narrow: they would all be slain. If Jove,
The Thunderer of the skies, design to crush
The Greeks and succor Troy, I should rejoice
Were the design at once fulfilled, and all
The sons of Greece ingloriously cut off, 85
Far from their Argos. But if they should turn
Upon us, and repulse us from their fleet,
And we become entangled in the trench,
I deem no messenger would e'er go back
To Troy from fighting with the rallied Greeks. 90

Heed, then, my words, and let the charioteers
Stay with the coursers at the trench, while we,
Armed, and on foot, and all in close array,
Follow our Hector. For the Greeks in vain
Will strive to stem our onset if, in truth,
The hour of their destruction be at hand.” 95

So spake Polydamas; and Hector, pleased
To hear the prudent counsel, leaped to earth
With all his arms, and left his car. The rest
Rode with their steeds no more, but, hastily 100
Dismounting, as they saw their noble chief,
Each bade his charioteer hold back his steeds,
Reined at the trench, in ranks. And then, apart,
They mustered in five columns, following close
Their leaders. First, the largest, bravest band, 105
Those who, with resolute daring, longed to break
The rampart and to storm the fleet, were led
By Hector and the good Polydamas,
Joined with Cēbriones,—for Hector left
His chariot to the care of one who held 110
An humbler station than Cēbriones.
Paris, Alcathōüs, and Agenor led
A second squadron. Helenus, a son
Of Priam, and Deiphobus, a youth

Of godlike form, his brother, took command 115
Of yet a third, — with whom in rank was joined
The hero Asius, son of Hyrtacus,
Whose bright-haired coursers, of majestic size,
Had borne him from Arisba and the banks
Of Selleis. Æneas led the fourth, — 120
The brave son of Anchises; and with him
Were joined Archilochus and Acamas,
Sons of Antenor, skilled in arts of war.
The band of Troy's illustrious allies
Followed Sarpedon, who from all the rest 125
Had chosen, to partake in the command,
Glaucus and brave Asteropæus. These
He deemed the bravest under him; yet he
Stood foremost of them all in warlike might.
Then all, with their stout bucklers of bull's-hide 130
Adjusted to each other, bravely marched
Against the Greeks, who, as they deemed, must fly
Before them, and must fall by their black ships.
Then all the other Trojans, and the allies
From foreign shores, obeyed the counsel given 135
By good Polydamas; but Asius, son
Of Hyrtacus, and prince of men, chose not
To leave his chariot and his charioteer,

But drave with them against the roomy ships.
Vain youth! — he was not destined to return, 140
Borne by his steeds and chariot, from the fleet,
And from the fate he braved, to wind-swept Troy.
His evil fate o’ertook him from the spear
Of great Idomeneus, Deucalion’s son;
For toward the galleys moored upon the left 145
He hastened by the way in which the Greeks,
With steeds and cars, retreated from the plain.
Thither he drave his coursers; there he found
The gates not closed, nor the long bar across,
But warriors held them open to receive 150
In safety their companions as they fled
From battle to the fleet. Exultingly
He turned his coursers thither, and his men
Followed him, shouting; for they thought the Greeks
Could not abide their onset, but must yield, 155
And perish by their ships. Deluded men! —
They met two mighty warriors at the gate, —
The brave descendants of the Lapithæ,
That warlike tribe: Pirithoüs’ gallant son
Was one, named Polypætes; with him stood 160
Leonteus, strong as Mars the slayer of men.
By the tall gates they stood, as giant oaks

Stand on the mountains and abide the wind
And the tempestuous rains of all the year,
Firm-planted on their strong and spreading roots. 165
So they, confiding in their strength of arm,
Waited for mighty Asius hasting on,
And fled not. Onward came the hostile troop,
With their tough shields uplifted, and with shouts:
All rushing toward the massive wall they came, 170
Following King Asius, and Iamenus,
Orestes, Thoön, Acamas the son
Of Asius, and Ænomaüs. Meanwhile
Leonteus and his comrade had retired
Within, encouraging the well-armed Greeks 175
To combat for the fleet; but when they saw
The rout and panic of their flying host,
They darted forth and fought before the gates,—
Fought like wild boars that in the mountains meet
A clamorous troop of men and dogs, and dart 180
Sideway at their assailants, break the trees
Close to the root, and fiercely gnash their tusks,
Until some javelin strikes them, and they die.
So on the breasts of the two warriors rang
The shining brass, oft smitten; for they fought 185
Fearlessly, trusting in the aid of those

Who held the wall, and their own valiant arms.
And they who stood on the strong towers hurled down
Stones, to defend the Achaians and their tents
And their swift ships. As snow-flakes fall to earth 190
When strong winds, driving on the shadowy cloud,
Shower them upon the nourishing glebe, so thick
Were showered the weapons from the hands of Greeks
And Trojans; and the helms and bossy shields,
Beaten by stones, resounded. Asius then — 195
The son of Hyrtacus—in anger groaned,
And smote his thighs impatiently, and said:—

“O Father Jove! thou then art wholly false.
I did not look to see the men of Greece
Stand thus before our might and our strong arms; 200
Yet they, like pliant-bodied wasps or bees,
That build their cells beside the rocky way,
And quit not their abode, but, waiting there
The hunter, combat for their young—so these,
Although but two, withdraw not from the gates, 205
Nor will, till they be slain or seized alive.”

He spake; but moved not thus the will of Jove,
Who planned to give the glory of the day
To Hector. Meanwhile, at the other gates
Fought other warriors,—but 't were hard for me, 210

Were I a god, to tell of all their deeds;
For round the wall on every side there raged,
Fierce as consuming fire, a storm of stones.
The Greeks, in bitter anguish, yet constrained,
Fought for their fleet; and sorrowful were all 215
The gods who in the battle favored Greece.

Now the two Lapithæ began the fight.
Pirithoüs' son, brave Polypætes, cast
His spear at Damasus; it broke its way
Through the helm's brazen cheek, — nor that alone: 220
Right through the temple went the brazen blade,
And crushed the brain within. He left him slain,
And next struck Pylon down, and Ormenus.
Leonteus, of the stock of Mars, assailed
Hippomachus, who from Antimachus 225
Derived his birth; he pierced him at the belt,
And, drawing forth his trenchant sword, hewed down,
In combat hand-to-hand, Antiphates;
He dashed him backward to the ground, and next
Smote Menon and Iamenus; and last 230
He slew Orestes: at his feet they lay,
A pile of dead, upon their mother Earth.

Then, as the twain were stripping from the dead
Their glittering arms, the largest, bravest band

Of those who eagerly desired to break 235
The rampart and to burn the ships with fire,
Following Polydamas and Hector, stood
Consulting at the trench. An augury,
Just as they were in act to cross, appeared
Upon the left: an eagle high in air, 240
Between the armies, in his talons bore
A monstrous serpent, bleeding, yet alive
And palpitating, — nor disabled yet
For combat; for it turned, and on the breast
Wounded the eagle, near the neck. The bird 245
In pain let fall his prize amid the host,
And flew away, with screams, upon the wind.
The Trojans shuddered at the spotted snake
Lying among them, and Polydamas
Said thus to fearless Hector, standing near: — 250

“Hector, thou almost ever chidest me
In council, even when I judge aright.
I know it ill becomes the citizen
To speak against the way that pleases thee,
In war or council, — he should rather seek 255
To strengthen thy authority; yet now
I will declare what seems to me the best:
Let us not combat with the Greeks, to take

Their fleet; for this, I think, will be the end, —
If now the omen we have seen be meant 260
For us of Troy who seek to cross the trench; —
This eagle, flying high upon the left,
Between the hosts, that in his talons bore
A monstrous serpent, bleeding, yet alive,
Hath dropped it mid our host before he came 265
To his dear nest, nor brought it to his brood; —
So we, although by force we break the gates
And rampart, and although the Greeks fall back,
Shall not as happily retrace our way;
For many a Trojan shall we leave behind, 270
Slain by the weapons of the Greeks, who stand
And fight to save their fleet. Thus will the seer,
Skilled in the lore of prodigies, explain
The portent, and the people will obey.”

Sternly the crested Hector looked, and spake: — 275
“Polydamas, the thing that thou hast said
Pleases me not, and easily couldst thou
Frame better counsels. If thy words convey
Thy earnest thought, the gods assuredly
Have made thee lose thy senses. Thou dost ask 280
That I no longer reverence the decree
Of Jove, the Thunderer of the sky, who gave

His promise, and confirmed it. Thou dost ask
That I be governed by the flight of birds,
Which I regard not, whether to the right 285
And toward the morning and the sun they fly,
Or toward the left and evening. We should heed
The will of mighty Jupiter, who bears
Rule over gods and men. One augury
There is, the surest and the best,—to fight 290
For our own land. Why darest thou the war
And conflict? Though we all should fall beside
The galleys of the Greeks, there is no fear
That thou wilt perish, for thou hast no heart
To stand against the foe;—no warrior thou! 295
Yet, if thou dare to stand aloof, or seek
By words to turn another from the fight,
The spear I wield shall take thy life at once.”

He spake, and went before; and all his band
Followed with fearful clamor. Jupiter, 300
The God of thunders, sending a strong wind
From the Idæan summits, drave the dust
Full on the galleys, and made faint the hearts
Of the Greek warriors, and gave new renown
To Hector and the men of Troy. For these, 305
Trusting in portents sent from Jupiter,

And their own valor, labored to break through
The massive rampart of the Greeks: they tore
The galleries from the towers, and levelled down
The breastworks, heaved with levers from their place 310
The jutting buttresses which Argive hands
Had firmly planted to support the towers,
And brought them to the ground; and thus they hoped
To force a passage to the Grecian camp.
Not yet did they of Greece give way: they fenced 315
The rampart with their ox-hide shields, and smote
The enemy from behind them as he came
Under the wall. The chieftains Ajax flew
From tower to tower, and cheered the Achaians on,
And roused their valor,—some with gentle words, 320
And some with harsh rebuke,—whome'er they saw
Skulk from the toils and dangers of the fight.

“O friends!” they said, “ye great in war, and ye
Of less renown, and ye of little note!—
For all are not alike in war,—the time 325
Demands the aid of all, as well ye know:
And now let no man turn him toward the fleet
Before the threats of Hector, but press on,
And each exhort his fellow: so may Jove,
Who flings the lightning from Olympus, grant 330

That, driving back their onset, we may chase
The enemy to the very walls of Troy."

Thus in the van they shouted, and awoke
New courage in the Greeks. As when the flakes
Of snow fall thick upon a winter-day, 335
When Jove the Sovereign pours them down on men,
Like arrows, from above;—he bids the wind
Breathe not; continually he pours them down,
And covers every mountain-top and peak,
And flowery mead, and field of fertile tilth, 340
And sheds them on the havens and the shores
Of the gray deep; but there the waters bound
The covering of snows,—all else is white
Beneath that fast-descending shower of Jove;—
So thick the shower of stones from either side 345
Flew toward the other,—from the Greeks against
The Trojans, and from them against the Greeks;
And fearful was the din along the wall.

Yet would illustrious Hector and the men
Of Troy have failed to force the gates and burst 350
The bar within, had not all-seeing Jove
Impelled his son Sarpedon to attack
The Greeks as falls a lion on a herd
Of hornèd beeves. The warrior held his shield,

A brazen orb, before him, — beautiful, 355
And fenced with metal; for the armorer laid
Broad plates without, while under these he sewed
Bull's-hides the toughest, edged with golden wires
Upon the rim. With this the warrior came,
Wielding two spears. As when a lion, bred 360
Among the mountains, fasting long from flesh,
Comes into the fenced pastures, without fear,
To prey upon the flock; and though he meet
The shepherds keeping watch with dogs and spears,
Yet will he not be driven thence until 365
He makes a spring into the fold and bears
A sheep away, or in the act is slain,
Struck by a javelin from some ready hand; —
Sarpedon, godlike warrior, thus was moved
By his great heart to storm the wall and break 370
Through the strong barrier; and to Glaucus, son
Of Lycia's king Hippolochus, he said: —

“Why, Glaucus, are we honored, on the shores
Of Lycia, with the highest seat at feasts,
And with full cups? Why look men up to us 375
As to the gods? And why do we possess
Broad, beautiful enclosures, full of vines
And wheat, beside the Xanthus? Then it well

Becomes us, foremost in the Lycian ranks
To stand against the foe, where'er the fight 380
Is hottest; so our well-armed Lycian men
Shall say, and truly: 'Not ingloriously
Our kings bear rule in Lycia, where they feast
On fatlings of the flock, and drink choice wine;
For they excel in valor, and they fight 385
Among our foremost.' O my friend, if we,
Leaving this war, could flee from age and death,
I should not here be fighting in the van,
Nor would I send thee to the glorious war;
But now, since many are the modes of death 390
Impending o'er us, which no man can hope
To shun, let us press on and give renown
To other men, or win it for ourselves!"

He spake; and Glaucus not unwillingly
Heard and obeyed. Right on the warriors pressed, 395
Leading the Lycian host. Menestheus, son
Of Peteus, saw, and trembled; for they came
With evil menace toward his tower. He looked
Along the Grecian lines in hope to see
Some chieftain there whose ready help might save 400
His comrades from their danger. He beheld
The rulers Ajax, never tired of war,

Standing with Teucer, who just then had left
His tent; and yet they could not hear his shout,
So fearful was the din that rose to heaven 405
From all the shields, and crested helms, and gates,
Smitten with missiles,—for at all the gates
The Lycians thundered, struggling hard to break
A passage through them. Then Menestheus called
A herald near, and bade Thoötes bear 410
A message to the leaders Ajax, thus:—

“Go, nobly-born Thoötes, and in haste
Call Ajax,—call them both, for that were best,—
Since terrible will be the slaughter here,
So fiercely are the Lycians pressing on, 415
Impetuous ever in assault. If there
The fight be also urgent, then at least
Let the brave Telamonian Ajax come,
And Teucer, the great archer, follow him.”

He spake. The herald listened and obeyed, 420
And flew along the summit of the wall
Built by the Greeks. He reached, and stood beside,
The chieftains Ajax, and addressed them thus:—

“Ajaces, leaders of the warlike Greeks,
The honored son of noble Peteus asks 425
That ye will come, though for a little space,

To aid him and to share his warlike toils;
For terrible will be the slaughter there,
So fiercely are the Lycians pressing on,
Impetuous ever in assault. If here
The fight be also urgent, then at least
Let the brave Telamonian Ajax come,
And Teucer, the great archer, follow him."

430

He ended. Ajax, son of Telamon,
Hearkened, and to his fellow-warrior said:—

435

"Here, where the gallant Lycomedes stands,
Ajax! remain, and, cheering on the Greeks,
Lead them to combat valiantly. I go
To stem the battle there, and when our friends
Are succored I will instantly return."

440

So speaking, Ajax, son of Telamon,
Departed thence, and with him Teucer, sprung
From the same father. With them also went
Pandion, carrying Teucer's crooked bow.

They came to brave Menestheus at his tower,
And went within the wall and met their friends,
Hard-pressed, — for gallantly the Lycian chiefs
And captains, like a gloomy tempest, rushed
Up the tall breastworks; while the Greeks withstood
Their onset, and a mighty clamor rose.

445

450

Then Telamonian Ajax smote to death
Epicles, great of soul, Sarpedon's friend :
Against that chief he cast a huge, rough stone,
That lay high up beside a pinnacle
Within the wall. No man with both his hands, — 455
Such men as now are, — though in prime of youth,
Could lift its weight; and yet he wielded it
Aloft, and flung it. Through the four-coned helm
It crashed, and brake the skull within. Down plunged
The Lycian, like a diver, from his place 460
On the high tower, and life forsook his limbs.
Then Teucer also wounded with a shaft
Glaucus, the brave son of Hippolochus,
As he leaped forth to scale the lofty wall, —
Wounded him where the naked arm was seen, 465
And made him leave the combat. Back he sprang,
Hiding amid the crowd, that so the Greeks
Might not behold the wounded limb, and scoff.
With grief Sarpedon saw his friend withdraw,
Yet paused not from the conflict, but took aim 470
At Thestor's son, Alcmaon, with his spear;
Pierced him; and drew the weapon out. The Greek,
Following the spear, fell headlong; and his arms,
Studded with brass, clashed round him as he fell.

Then did Sarpedon seize, with powerful hands, 475
The battlement; he wrenched it, and it came
To earth, and laid the rampart's summit bare,
To make a passage for the assailing host.

Ajax and Teucer saw, and both took aim
Together at Sarpedon: Teucer's shaft 480

Struck in the midst the buckler's glittering belt,
Just at the bosom; but Jove warded off
The death-stroke from his son, lest he should fall
Beside the galleys. Ajax, springing, struck

The buckler with his spear, and pierced its folds, 485
And checked the eager warrior, who gave way
A little, yet retreated not, but turned,
Encouraging the godlike Lycians thus:—

“Where, Lycians, is your fiery valor now?
Were I the bravest, it were hard, alone, 490
For me to force a passage to the fleet,
Though I have cleared the way. Come on with me!
Light is the task when many share the toil.”

He spake; and they who revered his words
Of exhortation drew more closely round 495
Their counsellor and sovereign, while the Greeks
Above them made their phalanxes more strong
Within the wall,—for urgent was the need;

Since neither could the gallant Lycians break
The barrier of the Greeks, and cut their way 500
Through to the fleet, nor could the warlike Greeks
Drive back the Lycians when they once had reached
The rampart. As two men upon a field,
With measuring-rods in hand, disputing stand
Over the common boundary, in small space, 505
Each one contending for the right he claims,
So, kept asunder by the breastwork, fought
The warriors over it, and fiercely struck.
The orbèd bull's-hide shields held up before
The breast, and the light targets. Many a one 510
Was smitten when he turned and showed the back
Unarmed, and many wounded through the shield.
The towers and battlements were steeped in blood
Of heroes,—Greeks and Trojans. Yet were not
The Greeks thus put to flight; but, as the scales 515
Are held by some just woman, who maintains,
By spinning wool, her household,—carefully
She poises both the wool and weights, to make
The balance even, that she may provide
A pittance for her babes,—thus equally 520
Were matched the warring hosts, till Jupiter
Conferred the eminent glory of the day

On Hector, son of Priam. He it was
Who first leaped down into the space within
The Grecian wall, and, with far-reaching voice, 525
Thus shouted, calling to the men of Troy:—

“Rush on, ye knights of Troy! rush boldly on,
And break your passage through the Grecian wall,
And hurl consuming flames against their fleet!”

So spake he, cheering on his men. They heard, 530
And rushed in mighty throngs against the wall,
And climbed the battlements, to charge the foe
With spears. Then Hector stooped, and seized a stone
Which lay before the gate, broad at the base
And sharp above, which two, the strongest men, — 535
As men are now, — could hardly heave from earth
Into a wain. With ease he lifted it,
Alone, and brandished it: such strength the son
Of Saturn gave him, that it seemed but light.

As when a shepherd carries home with ease 540
A wether's fleece, — he bears it in one hand,
And little is he cumbered with its weight, —
So Hector bore the lifted stone, to break
The beams that strengthened the tall folding-gates.
Two bars within, laid crosswise, held them firm, — 545
Both fastened with one bolt. He came and stood

Before them; with wide-parted feet he stood,
And put forth all his strength, that so his arm
Might drive the missile home; and in the midst
He smote the folding-gates. The blow tore off 550
The hinges; heavily the great stone fell
Within; the portals crashed; nor did the bars
Withstand the blow: the shattered beams gave way
Before it; and illustrious Hector sprang
Into the camp. His look was stern as night; 555
And terribly the brazen armor gleamed
That swathed him. With two spears in hand he came,
And none except the gods—when once his foot
Was on the ground—could stand before his might.
His eyes shot fire, and, turning to his men, 560
He bade them mount the wall; and they obeyed:
Some o'er the wall, some through the sculptured gate,
Poured in. The Achaians to their roomy ships
Fled, and a fearful uproar filled the air.

END OF VOL. I.

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